

= Chuck Baldwin presidential campaign , 2008 =

The Chuck Baldwin presidential campaign of 2008 began April 10 , 2008 as pastor and radio host Chuck Baldwin of Florida announced his candidacy for the Constitution Party presidential nomination . He previously served as the party 's vice @-@ presidential nominee in 2004 . Baldwin 's main opposition for the nomination was former ambassador Alan Keyes , who had just left the Republican Party . After a campaign touting his stands on civil liberties , foreign affairs , and religion , Baldwin won the nomination at the April 26 Constitution Party National Convention . Attorney Darrell Castle was selected as his running mate .

During the general election , Baldwin expressed paleo @-@ conservative positions on a number of issues including protectionism on trade , nonintervention in foreign affairs , religious practice in the public sphere , and nativism . He cast himself as a close ally of 2008 Republican presidential candidate , Representative Ron Paul , who ultimately endorsed Baldwin 's campaign .

With 199 @, @ 314 votes , about 0 @. @ 15 % of the total , Baldwin finished fifth in the race , ahead of Green Party nominee Cynthia McKinney , but behind both independent Ralph Nader and Libertarian Bob Barr , as well as Republican nominee John McCain and the eventual winner , Democratic nominee Barack Obama

= = Background = =

Chuck Baldwin was initially a Democrat , but changed his party affiliation to Republican in 1980 . In the 1970s , he founded Crossroad Baptist Church in Pensacola , Florida , which President Ronald Reagan recognized for its growth and influence . As a Republican , Baldwin headed the Florida branch of Moral Majority , which promoted social conservatism . He also hosted a radio show called Chuck Baldwin Live , which focused on conservative issues . It made its national radio debut on the Genesis Communications Network in 2001 .

Baldwin left the Republican Party in 2004 , believing it had become a " second big @-@ government , big @-@ spending party " that could be characterized as " more liberal than the Democratic Party ... in practice . " He joined the Constitution Party , but still considered himself a political independent . That year , Constitution Party presidential candidate Michael Peroutka asked Baldwin to be his running mate . The ticket won the nomination at the 2004 Constitution Party National Convention . In the general election , they received 143 @, @ 630 popular votes for 0 @. @ 12 % . Afterwards , Baldwin argued , " the American people haven 't rejected our message ; they haven 't heard our message . "

= = Early stages = =

While considering a run for president , during an October 2006 interview with The Conservative President 2008 website , Baldwin expressed his frustration with the Republican Party , which he believed was on a course of " self @-@ destruction " and that was only kept afloat by the " absurd liberalism of Democrats . " He praised Congressmen Tom Tancredo and Ron Paul as well as activists Pat Buchanan and Alan Keyes , but stated that the Republican Party had steered too far to the left for him to support any of their candidates for president . When asked if he would run for president in 2008 he stated that he had " no desire to run " but that he was " always open to God 's will . " Baldwin endorsed Ron Paul for the Republican presidential nomination in a message posted to YouTube on December 19 , 2007 .

During a March 25 , 2008 interview with Miller Politics , two weeks before Baldwin officially entered the race , he commended Alan Keyes as a possible Constitution Party candidate but stated that he " needs to clarify his foreign policy positions for the party . " He described Libertarian Party candidate Bob Barr as a " very attractive candidate " whom he " like [ s ] ... very much . " When asked about his own presidential aspirations , he responded by saying that " There are many great people in our party that , in my opinion , are much more qualified [ to be the presidential nominee ] than I am . I have always tried to be open to God 's will . At this time , however , I have no inclination that this is

God 's will for me . "

= = 2008 Constitution Party National Convention = =

Baldwin announced on April 10 , 2008 that he would seek the Constitution Party presidential nomination at the party 's April 23 ? 26 convention in Kansas City , Missouri . His run was believed to have arisen from draft efforts within the Constitution Party , who feared the party would nominate a pro @-@ Iraq War candidate like Alan Keyes . Until the convention , Baldwin did not campaign and in an April 17 interview with Miller Politics , he stated that he was " not running " but merely placing his name into consideration , " trusting that God will reveal His will accordingly . "

During the convention , the party 's founder Howard Phillips endorsed Baldwin and gave a passionate speech in which he referred to Keyes as " the Neocon candidate " who " lingered in the Republican Party until a week ago . " Afterwards , Baldwin defeated Keyes , 383 @. @ 8 to 125 @. @ 7 , winning approximately 74 % of the delegates . He won the majority of delegates from most states with the exceptions of Missouri , Maryland , and Oklahoma , where Keyes narrowly edged Baldwin . At Baldwin 's request , the delegates then chose attorney Darrell Castle of Tennessee as his running mate .

Following the nomination , Baldwin set up a campaign website and opened accounts on MySpace and Facebook . He announced that he would use the Internet in the same manner as Ron Paul " to circumvent the media , " holding the mainstream news media responsible for holding back third party candidates .

= = General election campaign = =

Though Baldwin was not included on many mainstream polls , a May 2008 Fox News opinion poll revealed favorable news for the campaign . It showed that 47 % of the public were open to voting for a third party presidential candidate such as Baldwin , compared to 39 % who were not . Moreover , a Zogby poll discovered that 42 % of conservatives ( whom the Baldwin campaign targeted ) said they would never vote for the presumptive Republican presidential nominee John McCain and found that 86 % of " very conservative " respondents were displeased .

Baldwin expressed his own discontent with the Republican Party in a May 22 interview with Montana News . He expressed frustration with evangelicals who " coalesc [ e ] around John McCain " despite his " twenty @-@ plus year track record of liberal policies . " Baldwin highlighted globalism as the main threat to the nation stating that " Immigration , the U.N .... , NATO , NAFTA , CAFTA , the North American Union , the Superhighway , the war in Iraq , China 's threat to our peace ... are connected " through globalism . Baldwin stated that Iran would only be a threat " by sneaking people into our country . And that would be far more difficult with a sealed border . " He stated that the border could be sealed by deploying troops to those areas .

At the end of May and the beginning of June , several controversial developments concerning the Baldwin campaign hit the press . Comments surfaced that were made by Baldwin , raising the possibility of a 9 / 11 conspiracy theory of a controlled demolition stating , " I don 't know whether there was any kind of an inside apparatus involved in this or not ... If there 's duplicity involved in some kind of conspiracy , then let 's find out who it is and prosecute whoever 's involved . "

= = = Growing media interest = = =

The campaign also increased a drive for ballot access , appealing to supporters for help to get on the presidential ballot in Pennsylvania , Massachusetts , Maryland , and West Virginia .

The campaign began August by announcing its plans to participate in a demonstration against illegal immigration in Denver during the Democratic National Convention . Baldwin was joined by Bob Barr , Alan Keyes and Tom Tancredo at the " Rally Against Illegal Immigration " during the first day of the convention . Later in August , Baldwin campaigned in Spartanburg , South Carolina where he criticized both party 's presidential nominee 's as " globalists . " He declared his opposition

to the Federal Reserve , whom he stated has " subjugated " the nation to " foreign dependence . " He railed against the use of the National Guard in the Iraq War remarking that the forces should be used to " repel " the " invasion " of illegal aliens from the southern border , and described the United Nations as " a sinister organization run by Marxists , socialists and communists . " Baldwin criticized both major parties for not cutting spending stating that " the only difference between Democrats and Republicans is Democrats want to tax and spend and Republicans want to borrow and spend . " He promised that slashing spending would be a priority in his administration .

On September 10 , Baldwin appeared on the Lou Dobbs Tonight television program on CNN where he proclaimed that if elected president he would release U.S. Border agents Jose Compean and Ignacio Ramos . The agents were sentenced to 11 and 12 year terms in prison , respectively , after shooting a drug smuggler on the US @-@ Mexico border . Baldwin promised he would release the men during his first day on the job as President .

= = = Final stages = = =

On October 7 , Baldwin addressed the John Birch Society on the second day of its 50th anniversary . At the event he discussed the role of Christianity in the United States public life and delivered his stump speech . He attacked globalist entities such as NAFTA , the International Criminal Court , the Law of the Sea Treaty and the Security and Prosperity Partnership as well as calling for the withdrawal of the United States from the United Nations .

Later in October , Baldwin was interviewed by NPR where he discussed his opposition to the Federal Reserve , which he described as a " fraudulent system " and which he blamed for the 2008 economic crisis . He attacked Republicans for " reneg [ ing ] on their promises " in 1994 's Contract with America to " eliminate five federal departments , such as Department of Education , Energy , Commerce ... " and to " slash spending . " He also criticized Republicans ' failure to criminalize abortion during their years in government . As president Baldwin stated he would eliminate the IRS and cut government spending as well . He stated that the " responsibility of government [ is ] to protect life , even life in the womb . "

Baldwin participated in a third party debate with Independent candidate Ralph Nader on October 23 , broadcast on CSPAN @-@ 2 . During the debate , Baldwin often agreed with Nader on as wide ranging issues as corporations and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan . He stood in solidarity with Nader in expressing the need to open the presidential debates to third party candidates . He emphasized his connections to Congressman Ron Paul throughout the debate , even suggesting that as president he would appoint " somebody like Ron Paul " as United States Secretary of Treasury . He articulated his opposition to the USA PATRIOT Act and questioned how an ideological conservative could support the legislation . But , he marked a disagreement with Nader on health care , criticizing government involvement in favor of free market solutions but with use of regulation to lower health care costs . Baldwin stated that if elected his first priority would be to secure the border . Throughout the debate Baldwin repeated his party 's pro @-@ life platform and support for the right to bear arms .

On election day , Baldwin was on ballot in 37 states . He was a write @-@ in candidate in eleven additional states including Montana where Ron Paul was listed as the party 's nominee . Baldwin was completely absent from ballots in Oklahoma , North Carolina and the District of Columbia .

= = = Results = = =

Baldwin 's campaign ended after receiving 199 @,@ 314 or 0 @.@ 15 % of the popular vote on Election Day . He finished in fifth place , but won the largest percentage of votes for his party since Howard Phillips in 1996 . 14 @,@ 865 of his votes were won in Michigan , but he won his largest percentage in Utah with 1 @.@ 26 % of the state 's votes .

= = Aftermath = =

Baldwin relocated to Montana in 2010 , and founded the Liberty Fellowship , believing the people of the state responded well to his constitutionalist message . In 2012 , he briefly ran for Lieutenant Governor of Montana as the running mate of Republican gubernatorial primary candidate Bob Fanning , but dropped out due to the lack of campaign funds .