

## CNBC learns not to 'mess with' Ron Paul, followers

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Filed by David Edwards and Muriel Kane

CNBC Washington correspondent John Harwood asked former Representative Joe Scarborough on Tuesday to tell him what Rep. Ron Paul is really like, because he's been amazed to discover lately that "if you mess with Ron Paul on television or online, you are going to feel the wrath of some serious followers."

Harwood explained that when CNBC did an [online poll](#) of who won the last GOP presidential debate on October 9, "Ron Paul dominated the debate, and some of my colleagues at CNBC thought that there was something wrong with that and they took the poll down. I want to tell you, my email box, thousands and thousands and thousands of email, like I haven't seen from any other -- you know, followers of Chris Dodd or Bill Richardson or Joe Biden."

Two days after the debate, CNBC Managing Editor Allen Wastler posted "[An Open Letter to the Ron Paul Faithful](#)" at the CNBC website, in which he accused them of having hacked the poll. Wastler wrote, "You guys are good. Real good. You are truly a force on World Wide Web and I tip my hat to you. ... You folks are obviously well-organized and feel strongly about your candidate and I can't help but admire that. But you also ruined the purpose of the poll."

However, the very next day, Harwood himself posted "[My Open Letter To Ron Paul Supporters](#)," in which he apologetically stated, "I agree with the complaints. I do not believe our poll was 'hacked.' Nor do I agree with my colleagues' decision to take it down, though I know they were acting in good faith. ... I have no reason to believe anything corrupt occurred with respect to our poll. To the contrary, I believe the results we measured showing an impressive 75% naming Paul reflect the organization and motivation of Paul's adherents. This is precisely what unscientific surveys of this kind are created to measure."

Joe Scarborough responded to Harwood's question by saying that Ron Paul has widespread appeal, with signs all over college campuses and traditional conservatives, libertarians, and even people on the far left responding positively to his positions on the war and on civil liberties. He added, though,



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that in the House of Representatives, "Everybody's thought that he's been crazy for a while, as far as too conservative, too libertarian. ... He's a very independent guy. He doesn't play by the rules."

Scarborough further noted that if Paul were to run for president as an independent, it "would be really bad news for the Republicans." He then seemed to think better of his earlier remark about Paul's colleagues considering him crazy, concluding, "He's an extremely impressive man, he's brilliant ... and everybody's excited about this guy."

The following video is from MSNBC's *Morning Joe*, broadcast on October 16, 2007.

