

Donald Benjamin for President



Is that a wildfire behind me?

In 2012, the Tucson, Arizona, alternative newspaper THE TUCSON WEEKLY sponsored a contest called 'Project White House.' The WEEKLY invited all comers to submit simple paperwork to the Arizona Secretary of State to be added to the Arizona Republican Party Primary ballot. I bit and did so, even holding my nose and registering Republican—a requirement which the Arizona Secretary of State imposed upon me in order to accept my paperwork. And what do you know?

When the time came for the several approved candidates to draw lots to see who should be listed first on the Republican Primary ballot, I, by chance, won that honor. So there I was, my name atop an official ballot that included such also-rans as Mitt Romney, Newt Gingrich, and others. I had two questions: 1) Could I actually get elected and 2) WHERE do they come up with these crazy first names??

Included in the audience the day the names for ballot order were drawn was none other than the 'Toughest Sheriff in America,' one Joe Arpaio who was attending as surrogate for candidate Rick Perry, then and now governor of Texas. You should have seen the face he made when he learned that I was to be listed first (1st) and his man was to be listed seventeenth (17th)! If looks could kill... Don't believe me? Here's the link which includes the sheriff's patented grimace: <http://cronkitenewsonline.com/2012/01/ballot-order-set-by-drawing-for-arizonas-gop-presidential-primary/>

So there I was, Donald Benjamin, son of Leonard William and Carol Ruth (Quick) Benjamin, about to go down in history as the only descendant of Welsh coal miners (that I know of) to run for President of the United States of America, the most powerful nation on earth which, incidentally, is also the nation with the most inept politically corrupt Congress on the face of the Planet. What an honor!

But the TUCSON WEEKLY wasn't content to field ten (count them, ten) Project White House candidates in a crowded field of twenty-four Republican hopefuls. They also sponsored a candidate debate that aired on Tucson's public access television station. It is my understanding that all candidates listed on the ballot were invited but only the Project White House slate attended. I guess Newt and Mitt and the others had a conflict in January 2012. The debates were held and the TUCSON WEEKLY decided to endorse not myself but one of the other candidates who shall remain nameless. Let Sarah Gonzales get her own blog.

<https://projectwhitehouse.wordpress.com/newsroom/project-white-house-announces-televised-debate/>

The point of all this is, in order to run in 2012 as a Project White House candidate, I had to prepare a lot of position papers and platform statements. It's a shame to let these languish especially since so little has changed since 2012. My platform was both succinct and vitriolic. My main target of criticism was, naturally, Congress. And, since nothing has changed in the last four years to improve Congress' woeful track record, my critiques of 2012 still apply. And so here it is, my 2012 platform. I hereby give permission for any right-thinking individual(s) to adopt, adapt, and implement any and all of my ideas:

Donald Paul Benjamin:

Platform for Project White House 2012

When elected President of the United States, I will immediately pursue constitutional amendments and/or executive mandates to accomplish the following:

1. Between the day I take office through March 31, 2012, Congress shall pass no new laws. My veto will insure their compliance. Congress shall take this period to reflect on their past misbehavior and clean out their desks.
2. Effective April 1, 2012, Congress shall adjourn for two years without pay before they do any more damage.
3. A junta of fifty six-graders (one from each state) selected based on decorum and attendance will run the legislative branch while Congress is adjourned.
4. I will select my cabinet from among successful business people who volunteer to serve without salary.

5. I will serve for four years at a fixed salary of \$73,423.16 per year not including the use of Air Force One which is a really cool plane.

6. The military, the Supreme Court, et cetera can take care of themselves providing they don't ask the Legislative or Executive Branch for increased budgets. If they do, we'll fire them and find some people who will work for the old salary.

7. All secret things can stay secret as long as I don't find out about them. Mostly the FBI, the CIA, and other such mischievous agencies will be charged with hunting down and dispatching (with extreme prejudice) any lobbyist who used to be a federal government employee.

8. Republicans, Democrats, and others planning a coup to restore the government to its bad old habits must schedule their insurrections two months in advance and, as assigned, assemble in the Rose Garden, checking each sidearm at the door. Compromise, civility, and reasoned persuasion will be the weapons of choice.

9. The White House (renamed Casa Blanca in honor of sweeping immigration reform and passage of the Dream Act) will be open on alternate Thursdays for free tours conducted by Dick Cheney (the former vice president will not be armed) and Ralph Nader (Mr. Nader will be allowed to carry a blunderbuss) and thirty-seven retired former U.S. Representatives who were unable to leave Washington and return home because disenchanted voters were waiting at the arrival airport with tar and feathers.

10. No new laws shall be passed until all the old laws are fixed.

11. All government agencies will be required to reduce their primary forms to a single page. To assist in this rewrite, community college English instructors from throughout the nation will be invited to critique each document reviewing them for awkwardness, usage, legalese, moronic repetitiveness, hyperbole, ambiguity, paradox, contradiction, inconsistency, and toxicity. All government documents must eventually conform but first to be condensed will be protracted and confusing forms with which the public is currently obliged to struggle: the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), income tax forms, applications for veteran's benefits, and applications for social security benefits.

12. By Executive Order, nationwide, all grocery stores must be laid out in identical floor plans so that shoppers entering will always find fresh fruits and vegetables on the right, toilet paper on aisle 3, frozen section dead ahead, aspirin and other drug products on the far left, et cetera. Those stores which do not comply will be seized by the National Guard and converted to roller rinks.

13. When the government (and every grocery store) is subsequently restored to sanity, Congress will be systematically restored as follows:

a. All living U.S. Senators will be allowed to resume their seats to serve the duration of their term excluding the two years we were blissfully free of their bombast. Senators shall be reinstated at a fixed and unalterable salary of \$73,423.16 per year. To manage expenses, they shall be housed in dormitories and transported to and from work by bus.

\$13,423.16 per year shall be withheld from their salary and applied to retiring the national debt that I'm pretty sure they had a hand in creating.

b. All deceased U.S. Senators will be left in the ground to be replaced by popular election in the respective district on April 1, 2014. Subsequently, April 1 will replace the first Tuesday in November as the nation's official Election Day.

c. The Senate will be reinstated exactly as it is at present, restoring all its barbarous, counterproductive, lecherous, boorish, ridiculous, bizarre, nefarious, reprehensible, manipulative, and unscrupulous traditions including, but not limited to, the following:

1. Filibustering
2. Lollygagging and Folly
3. Hubris
4. Prostitution to Lobbyists
5. Procrastination
6. Self-Righteous Officiousness

Thus, criminals, sociopaths, narcissists, guttersnipes, egotists, loafers, bricks, slackers, and ne'er do wells can continue to aspire to become United States Senators. As a counter-balance to the Senate's business as usual, the United States House of Representatives will be reconstituted (by constitutional amendment) as the truly representative body described in d. below.

d. No House member will be allowed to resume his or her seat. They will have to seek other employment—preferably overseas or in a distant galaxy (and if they want to be hired, I suggest NOT mentioning their time in Congress). Members of the new improved House will be selected by the retiring sixth grade junta (now eighth graders with hormones and problems of their own). Representatives will be chosen, as are jurors, from a pool of eligible citizens residing in the existing congressional districts (no sense redrawing all those lines, besides I like salamanders). Each chosen citizen-representative shall serve for two years with tax-free compensation comparable to the salary drawn by the Representative replaced. Thereafter succeeding citizen-representatives shall be chosen from eligible citizens by lottery. The House will never convene as a body but will conduct all business virtually using appropriate computer media. An entirely new group of citizen-representatives will be selected every two years in perpetuity with the hope that eventually the majority of citizens will have had the opportunity to serve.