

Creator claims raid is linked to Paul campaign

Von NotHaus finds the timing suspect

Evansville Courier Press

By, Gavin Lesnick

November 30th, 2007

<http://www.courierpress.com/news/2007/nov/30/creator-claims-raid-is-linked-to-paul-campaign/>

A federal investigation into the legality of liberty dollars started long before Texas congressman Ron Paul became a presidential candidate, but the alternative currency's founder thinks the timing of a recent raid on his Evansville-based organization was politically motivated.

Among other items confiscated during a Nov. 14 search of Liberty Services, federal authorities took two tons of newly minted copper dollars featuring Paul's likeness on one side.

Bernard von NotHaus, creator of the liberty dollar and the group's "monetary architect," said the raid came shortly after the arrival of the large shipment of Ron Paul dollars, which von NotHaus likened to campaign support buttons.

"It defies logic to think that it would be unrelated, quite honestly," he said. "... I think they knew about it. And they got it just in time to come over and raid us when we got the product. It does look suspect. And I think that's an infringement on his campaign. Because now we don't have the 60,000 Ron Pauls to go out there to publicize his campaign."

For their part, campaign officials say they paid little attention to the raid and that the congressman never had anything to do with having his image on the coin.

Von NotHaus said he got to know Paul because they "travel in the same economic circles," and it soon became clear they shared similar views on a number of issues.

Von NotHaus donated the maximum he could, \$2,300, to Paul's campaign under federal election law, but he said he wanted to do something more to draw attention to the election efforts. Thus, the Ron Paul dollar was born as an independent — and unregulated — contribution.

"I knew Ron, I identified with his economic beliefs and I wanted to support his campaign," von NotHaus said. "So why not?"

Since the coin debuted July 4 of this year, von NotHaus said he has not spoken with Paul so as not to jeopardize the independent contribution status.

But von NotHaus said he believes the campaign was pleased he made the coins because, especially after the raid, he said it drew more visitors to Paul's campaign Web site and spurred extensive media coverage, including a recent front page story in The Washington Post.

"That wasn't too bad," von NotHaus said. "... This creates a lot more buzz. And that's what I wanted to do. I wanted to create some buzz. I wanted to help his campaign."

At least a dozen people attended a potluck dinner and meeting Thursday at Liberty Services' national office in a shopping center on Stockwell Road near the Lloyd Expressway.

"I just wanted to come out and show my support for what they are trying to do," said Brian Wells of Evansville.

Wells, a Paul supporter, said he wasn't sure the seizure of Liberty Services' assets was politically motivated as von NotHaus claimed.

"It's hard to say for sure what the motivation with the government is. Maybe they didn't want the competition," he said.

Jesse Benton, Paul's communications director, said the Ron Paul dollar's effect on the campaign was probably minimal — calling it and the raid a "blip on the side that we didn't pay much attention to."

As for von NotHaus' contention that the raid was somehow politically motivated, Benton said Paul's campaign does not share that view.

"I seriously doubt that," Benton said. "It really has nothing to do with us. I don't know why (von NotHaus) would say that."

Von NotHaus said seizing the 60,000 Paul dollars — which had all been sold already and were awaiting shipment to customers — was akin to someone tearing down campaign posters or ripping off campaign bumper stickers en masse.

"Would anybody suspect that maybe that was politically motivated?" he said. "Well, yes they would. I think you have to suspect here that there's something dirty going on."