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Hope of the GOP: "George Bush is the Worst President"

Senator Ted Stevens's inevitable indictment yesterday made one Alaska Republican deliriously happy: lawyer and economic historian [Vic Vickers](#), who's mounting a very-generously-self-funded primary campaign against Stevens.

Not so happy: national GOPers. Or they won't be when they get a load of exactly what kind of Republican their electoral savior is.

The best hope the GOP has in Alaska is for a fresh face to knock off Stevens in the August 26 primary, allowing Republicans to approach the general election from higher ground. Well -- Vickers is nothing if not fresh. "As an American historian, I've studied every president," he told me over the phone today from Anchorage, "and I can say with authority that George Bush is the worst president in American history."

Oh, yes. Vic Vickers is a George-W.-Bush-hating, Exxon-despising, Iraq-War-loathing Republican who wants to "put an end to the stranglehold that Big Oil" has on Alaska and has an Iraq withdrawal plan -- if the Jordanians and Saudis don't start cutting big checks, you just pack everyone up and come right home -- that would make even Eli Pariser queasy.

It gets worse. Pressed to identify a Republican he admires in Alaska besides himself, Vickers could not come up with a single one. He is contributing \$500 to [Tim June](#), a Democrat running for the state Senate whom he describes as his "comrade in arms" in the cause of political reform. But he *is* a real Republican, Vickers insists -- just of an older vintage. "I'm running ... as a Bull Moose, a Teddy Roosevelt Republican," he explains. "The spirit of Alaska is embodied in the Bull Moose Party. [Roosevelt] was all about breaking with Standard Oil."

To [establishment Alaska Republicans](#), Vickers might seem like a peculiarly bad headache, but he's really only part of a larger phenomenon this year: candidates signing up to run on the state or local GOP ticket who then publicly deride the party or pioneer their own esoteric political philosophies. Call them the weakened GOP's opportunistic infections: people like Montana's [Bob Kelleher](#), whose campaign website initially stated he was a member of the Green Party, or North Carolina's [Carl Mumpower](#), who put out a press release calling for Bush's impeachment and, shortly thereafter, put out another release informing the public that angry officials from his own party had kindly requested he "impeach himself."

There was one big-name Alaska Republican Vickers said he'd been excited about: Reform-minded Republican governor Sarah Palin. Unfortunately, her promise of new politics has gone the way of all flesh, a disappointment that contributed to Vickers's decision to challenge Stevens in the primary. "Palin has authorized the hunting of wolves by helicopter," he told me. "They're gunning down wolves by helicopter, going over to the pups with a pistol and shooting the pups in the head. That is barbaric," he said urgently over the crackling phone line. Vickers may be an anti-spending Roosevelt Republican, but in that moment he sounded for all the world like a younger [Robert Byrd](#). "Barbaric!"

--Eve Fairbanks

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