

Roger Williams University

DOCS@RWU

Law School Blogs

School of Law Publications

3-30-2012

Dean Logan's Blog: Tea Party and the Constitution Program Draws National Experts

Roger Williams University School of Law

Follow this and additional works at: https://docs.rwu.edu/law_pubs_blogs

Recommended Citation

Roger Williams University School of Law, "Dean Logan's Blog: Tea Party and the Constitution Program Draws National Experts" (2012). *Law School Blogs*. 157.

https://docs.rwu.edu/law_pubs_blogs/157

This Document is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Law Publications at DOCS@RWU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Law School Blogs by an authorized administrator of DOCS@RWU. For more information, please contact mwu@rwu.edu.

Dean Logan's Blog

Tea Party and the Constitution Program Draws National Experts

Posted by David Logan on 03/30/2012 at 10:14 AM

Organized by our own [Jared Goldstein](#), an expert in “[popular constitutionalism](#)” experts from around the country came to RWU Law for a fascinating conference last month. Co-sponsored with the United States District Court for Rhode Island, a packed house and overflow rooms were treated to an all-star line-up, featuring keynote addresses by United States Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI, and a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee), and Jack Balkin, Knight Professor of Law and the First Amendment at Yale Law School. Video of Sen. Whitehouse [opening remarks](#).



U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)

After a [greeting](#) from Federal Judge Will Smith, the presenters got down to business.



Judge Will Smith (U.S. District Court - District of RI)

[Panel 1](#) was entitled “Which Constitution,” and focused on the significance of narrative in constitutional discourse. The speakers, William Forbath (Texas), Rebecca Zietlow (Toledo), and Lawrence Solum (Georgetown) considered the importance of the stories we tell about ourselves, and the role they have played in various socio/legal movements, like the Civil Rights and labor movements historically, and the Tea party movement in contemporary constitutional debate.



Jared Goldstein, Williams Forbath, Rebecca Zietlow, Lawrence Solum



Bela August Walker (RWU Law), Lawrence Solum

[Panel 2](#) focused on “Whose Constitution,” and featured Elizabeth Price Foley (Florida International), Mark Tushnet (Harvard), and RWU Law’s Jared Goldstein, tackling the controversial topic of whether the Supreme Court of the United States is the sole interpreter of the meaning of the Constitution. The discussants paid close attention to the rise of the Tea Party, and how it compares with previous social/political movements that previously attacked the modern administrative state as unconstitutional, including the American Liberty League in the 1930s.



Elizabeth Price Foley



Mark Tushnet



Jared Goldstein

After a lunch break, [Prof. Jack Balkin](#) provided an erudite, and entertaining, analysis of the role of popular constitutionalism and the 2012 election.



Jack Balkin

Finally, Steve Calabresi (Northwestern), Douglas NeJaime (Loyola-LA), and Ilya Somin (George Mason) had a [lively discussion](#) of how popular constitutionalism works (for example, changing the law of gay marriage), how debates can be shaped by executive branch leaders, and how public ignorance might actually undercut a public role in constitutional debate. Last up was a veteran of popular constitutionalism, our own Prof. Carl Bogus, who provided an insider's take on an example of popular constitutionalism at the state level, drawn from his work on behalf of a successful effort to amend the Rhode Island Constitution.



Jared Goldstein, Steve Calabresi, Douglas NeJaime, Ilya Somin, Carl Bogus



Carl Bogus



Steve Calabresi



Front row (l to r) Rebecca Zietlow, Jared Goldstein, William Forbath, Dean David A. Logan,
Second Row (l to r) Steve Calabresi, Lawrence Solum, Carl Bogus, Jack Balkin, Mark Tushnet,
Ilya Somin,
Elizabeth Price Foley, and Douglas NeJaime