

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

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September 2016

Poll: Majority of voters want Johnson on debate stage

By Jessie Hellmann

Excerpted from *The Hill*

Published on August 25, 2016

The majority of American voters want to see Libertarian Party nominee Gary Johnson participate in the presidential debates, a new poll released Thursday shows.

The Quinnipiac University poll shows 62 percent of likely voters nationally say Johnson should be included in the debates this year.

Republicans and Democrats feel similarly about the issue, the poll indicates, with 60 percent of Democrats and 56 percent of Republicans saying Johnson should

be allowed to debate Democratic nominee Hillary Clinton and Republican nominee Donald Trump.

Among independent voters, 69 percent think Johnson should be allowed to participate in the presidential debates.

As Trump and Clinton experience record low favorability numbers among the electorate, Johnson hopes more voters will flock to third-party candidates and help him claim a spot on the debate stage to increase his national exposure.

But the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates requires candidates to have an average of 15 percent support in five predetermined polls before they can be

added to the debate stage.

Those polls this year are the ABC News–*Washington Post* poll, the CBS–*New York Times* poll, the NBC News–*Wall Street Journal* poll, the CNN–Opinion Research Corporation poll and the Fox News poll.

While the Quinnipiac University poll isn't considered by the presidential debates commission, Johnson polled 10 percent support in a four-way match-up between him, Trump, Clinton and Green Party nominee Jill Stein.

Johnson has 8.9 percent support nationally, according to a RealClearPolitics polling average. •

Arizona: Where Gary Johnson most likely to change outcome

By Thomas Beaumont, Associated Press

Excerpted from the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*

Published on Sept. 4, 2016

PHOENIX—The Libertarian Party nominee's best chance to influence the presidential race may come in Arizona, where the former New Mexico governor appeals to a group of finicky conservatives who make up part of the GOP base.

"It could happen," said GOP Sen. Jeff Flake. "Donald Trump has managed to make this an interesting state in terms of presidential politics, and not in the way that Republicans have wanted."

Johnson "is an easy out for some people in our party," Flake told the Associated Press.

About a dozen of the most contested states will help determine which candidate gets the 270 electoral votes to win the presidency. In Arizona, where the Republican nominee has carried the state in 11 of the past 12 presidential elections, Johnson could play the spoiler, potentially putting 11 electoral votes in Clinton's column.

The GOP's recent struggle with independent-minded, small-government Libertarians was clear before Trump's speech Wednesday in Phoenix, when he reaffirmed a hard line on immigration. And his stance could alienate the roughly one-quarter of Hispanic voters in the state who usually align with Republicans.

"I think that right now we're at a tipping point, where at any moment we are going to begin to see an outpouring of support," said Latino GOP strategist Juan Hernandez, who works for Johnson in Ariz.

Sensing an opportunity herself, Clinton began airing television advertisements in the state Friday, and has reserved \$500,000 in ad time through mid-September.

Democratic strategist Andy Barr said Hispanic turnout was "the multimillion-dollar question." About one-third of the state's population identifies as Latino, but their share of the vote [is] 12–16 percent.

"This closer it gets to 20 percent, the more our chances of winning go up," Barr said.

Johnson will appear on the ballot in every state, while Green Party nominee Jill Stein is on track to make it in at least half. Neither is remotely within reach of carrying a state. Neither seems in a position to tip any state toward Trump.

But Johnson could move a close race toward Clinton, in much the same way that Nader pulled enough votes away from Democrat Gore in 2000 to hand Florida to Republican George W. Bush.

Four years ago, Libertarian candidates in Arizona drew enough votes away from Republicans that Democrats Ann Kirkpatrick and Kyrsten Sinema won election to the U.S. House.

Flake, who had endeared himself to many Libertarians while serving in the House, won his Senate race that year, too.

"It's a really sore spot for the party," Arizona Republican Party spokesman Tim Sifert said of those 2012 results. "You could see people frustrated, throwing away their vote and going with a third-party candidate."

Libertarian appeal

The views of most Libertarians, focused on personal liberty and small government, overlap more with Republicans than Democrats. Johnson's call for dramatically lower business taxes and reg-

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Socialist magazine exhorts: Gary Johnson not worth a protest vote

by Nick Tabor

Excerpted from *Jacobin Magazine*

Published on Sept. 6, 2016

Editor's note: When statists work up a sweat trying to convince Americans to vote against Gary Johnson for president, Libertarian Party members know we must be doing something right. Here's a pitch from the quintessentially progressive Jacobin Magazine, self-described as "a leading voice of the American left, offering socialist perspectives on politics, economics, and culture."

Gary Johnson, the Libertarian Party nominee for president, told the *New Yorker* in July that he'd taken a quiz on *ISide-With.com* to see which other candidate's views aligned most with his own. The answer, it turned out, was Bernie Sanders. "It's about everything but economics," he said, adding that they agree broadly on marijuana legalization, foreign policy, and "crony capitalism."

The remark was characteristic in several ways. As *New Yorker* writer Ryan Lizza noted, Johnson—who joined the [Libertarian Party] in 2011—has consciously broken from fellow libertarian Ron Paul by emphasizing his common ground with those who

lean left, rather than right. He's been making the rounds with other mainstream liberal publications and with late-night TV hosts, casting himself as a sort of quasi-hippie who just wants to legalize pot and end the wars.

A few issues aside, Johnson's politics are toxic. What he downplays as "economics" is actually the core of his political philosophy: his fierce belief that the "free market" knows best, and that most anything the state can do, private business can do better.

This was borne out during his tenure as New Mexico's Republican governor. Those eight years were marked by drastic calls for austerity and a relentless drive to privatize or eliminate functions of state government.

After inaugurating N.M.'s use of private prisons, Johnson made it his top political priority to install a school voucher system. He also annulled public employees' collective-bargaining rights, slashed funding for social programs, reduced taxes for the wealthy, implemented one of the country's strictest welfare-reform programs.

In 2002, the libertarian Cato Institute... raved, "[He] has done much to create private-sector jobs and to erode the culture of dependence on government."

Privatize

By 2003, [Johnson] had set the state record for vetoes, rejecting 739 bills passed by the Democratic legislature.

He rejected minimum-wage increases and backed "right-to-

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New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

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Kerry Daniel	John Huber	Mark McCauley	Christopher Ryan	William Yeniscavich

Jacobin: Johnson too fiscally conservative

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work” bills. In 1999, when public-employee unions’ right to collectively bargain was to expire, Johnson vetoed a bill to extend it. AFSCME’s Carter Bundy told me 10,000 government workers saw their wages frozen.

Johnson seized on Bill Clinton’s welfare-reform law to push more poor people into minimum-wage jobs. The law required states to tighten up their rules for welfare recipients: for instance, states had to stop doling out benefits to families after five years.

The legislature passed a modest series of reforms, but Johnson vetoed these and announced his own rules: a three-year instead of a five-year limit on benefits, a requirement that recipients find work within 60 days of getting on [welfare], and a provision stipulating that recipients over 20 could no longer enroll in school instead of working. For good measure, he slashed \$10 million from the welfare budget.

Within a few months, the state had knocked more than 16,000 people off its welfare rolls, and its poverty rate had risen to first in the nation, according to the state’s legislature.

But [the state] Supreme Court ordered the governor to cease his reform program. Johnson worked out a compromise with the [legislature] that required recipients to find work within two years (instead of sixty days) and cut off benefits after five years (instead of three).

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In 1995, he vetoed hundreds of line items. Later that year, when the state’s health department faced a budget crunch, his solution was to impose a time limit on benefits for disabled adults.

[In 1998], Johnson eliminated roughly \$48 million from the budget. He slashed funding for programs that subsidized drugs for AIDS patients, for home-care services, and for a toll-free line to the legislature.

Johnson argued lower [tax] rates would attract more “high-skill, well-paid jobs,” including those of corporate executives. The legislature proved the chief impediment. While he succeeded in bringing down the top-bracket rate for personal income taxes in the 1990s, it only dropped from 8.5 to 8.2 percent. Still, he convinced the legislature in 2001 to reduce taxes across the board by \$72 million.

On education, Johnson’s unrealized dream was a voucher program that would have diverted students—and tax dollars—to private [schools]. He wanted to offer parents several thousand dollars to send their kids to whichever school they preferred, claiming it would improve public schools by forcing them to compete and cause the underperforming ones to close. The legislature never signed on—thanks largely to the lobbying of public-education advocates.

No friend of the left

To his credit, Johnson did advocate gay marriage long before it was legalized by the Supreme Court. He also criticizes mass surveillance, foreign interventions, and the War on Drugs.

These positions are admirable, to be sure. But none of them suggests a substantive change in the way Johnson thinks about property relations or workers’ rights. He’s still the same governor who attacked public employees’ collective bargaining rights, who leapt at the opportunity to punish welfare recipients, who thought it prudent to directly introduce the profit motive into prison operations.

If anything, [Johnson has] doubled down on his hard-right economic views. He opposes all deficit spending, a position that would make further doses of austerity the only option during downturns.

Make no mistake: obligatory references to “crony capitalism” notwithstanding, Johnson’s faith in capitalist markets is unwavering. He is no friend of the Left, no legitimate vessel for carrying forward any kind of progressive political revolution. He remains, at heart, the teenager who thinks economics can be taught in one lesson, and that freedom means protecting the liberty of the propertied. •

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College Republican groups support Cornell chapter's endorsement of Johnson, following revocation of credentials

By Drew Musto

Excerpted from the *Cornell Daily Sun*

Published on Sept. 5, 2016

A string of college Republican chapters across New York State has issued statements denouncing the state federation's decision to revoke its recognition of the Cornell Republicans.

The decision to revoke Cornell's chapter came in the wake of the group's endorsement [on Sept. 2] of Libertarian candidate Gary Johnson—an action the New York Federation of College Republicans called “unacceptable.” The federation said that while the group would have been within its rights to refuse to endorse nominee Donald Trump, it could not endorse another party's candidate, the *Sun* previously reported.

However, in the hours following this decision, many college Republican groups have protested that the decision to ban the Cornell Republicans violates both the federation's constitution and a broader principle of free speech.

The Ithaca College Republicans condemned the NYFCR executive board's decision, saying it was an “egregious violation of the NYFCR constitution” in a resolution posted Monday.

The constitution states that the NYFCR's purpose is “to promote the principles of the limited government, fiscal sensibility, economic freedom and personal responsibility,” and “to aid in the election of candidates adhering to those values at every level of Government.”

Thus, the federation's mission should be to support any candidate who has “a proven record of dedication and actions that further the goals of the Republican Party and Federation,” according to the constitution. The Cornell Republicans' endorsement message argued that Johnson better exemplifies these conservative principles than either Trump or Hillary Clinton.

“Governor Johnson's commitment to fiscal conservatism is unparalleled,” their endorsement message says. “Governing a blue state, he [shrank] the size of the government, balanced the state's

budget, and never increased taxes. While we do not agree with all of his positions, we firmly support his devotion to free trade, states' rights, and other conservative principles.”

In their statement, the Ithaca College (I.C.) chapter also pointed out that there is no clause in the federation's constitution that details the procedure for the expulsion of a member, suggesting that instead conservative groups should defer to a faith in free speech.

“As conservatives, we must respect the First Amendment right to free speech and the ability to vote and endorse any candidate,” the chapter said.

Adam Dohrenwend, president of the Geneseo College Republicans, also released a statement Monday on behalf of his chapter's executive board, calling NYFCR's leadership “irresponsible and heavy-handed” and its decision “hasty.”

“Not only is the action taken against Cornell unbecoming of an organization dedicated to the ideals of free speech and open dis-

course essential to the Republican Party, but it is also without any constitutional justification or precedent,” Dohrenwend wrote.

He added that NYFCR's decision reflects the hostility surrounding this year's election, especially given prominent di-

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—Cornell Republicans, in their statement endorsing Johnson

visions within Republican camps.

“Rather than make an effort to understand [the Cornell Republicans'] sentiment, the Federation has decided to browbeat its own members and further contribute to the divisiveness that has unfortunately been allowed to prevail this election,” Dohrenwend said.

Neither the I.C. Republicans nor the Geneseo College Republicans has endorsed a candidate for president, although the Ithaca chapter previously released a statement saying that it would not support Trump. •

Editor's note: Libertarians recognize the right of private organizations to set their own standards for affiliates.

Johnson could change outcome

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ulation to unburden entrepreneurs resonates with Matthew Sherman of Phoenix, who describes himself as more as a conservative than as a Republican.

“I'm for whoever has the best plan on startup companies,” said the 31-year-old who's working on a business networking app. “So far, that's Gary.”

Republican Dave Richins, a councilman in Mesa City, said Johnson is conservative on spending, but tolerant on social issues, which he calls “a pragmatic combination.”

“For me, a lifelong Republican, I don't agree with everything Johnson proposes,” said Richins, a Johnson organizer. “But I find his pragmatism refreshing. That's how we get things done.”

Johnson's hands-off approach to government also includes de-

criminalizing marijuana, and he could benefit from a November ballot proposal in Arizona on that question.

“That's another reason for Libertarians to vote in higher numbers,” said Barr, who is running the decriminalization campaign. “We're inclined to believe that could increase Johnson's performance.”

At the beginning of August, Johnson's campaign had \$1.2 million after raising \$1.6 million in July, according to FEC reports. Since Aug. 1, he's raised more than \$3 million, according to his campaign. That's a paltry sum compared with Trump and Clinton, whose campaign said it raised a total of \$143 million last month.

Johnson is spending in a few competitive campaign states, including Colorado, Iowa, New Hampshire and Wisconsin, and less competitive ones such as Oregon, New Mexico, and Utah.

Arizona is not on that list, but aides say it likely will be, this fall.

“He's fairly well known in Arizona,” said Johnson's spokesman, Joe Hunter. “We have a natural base of support there.” •