

Published for the friends and supporters of the Libertarian Party

LIBERTY PLEDGE

NEWSLETTER

Libertarian National Committee, Inc. • 1444 Duke St. • Alexandria, VA 22314 • Phone: (202) 333-0008 • Fax: (202) 333-0072
www.LP.org June 2016

Wall Street Journal editorial: Johnson–Weld is an ‘honorable alternative’ to Trump/Clinton

by Matt Welch

Excerpted from *Reason’s Hit & Run Blog*

Published on May 31, 2016

The lead editorial in today’s *Wall Street Journal* is headlined “The Libertarian Alternative: An option for the many Never Trump, Never Clinton voters.” After throwing cold water on “the mooted third-party campaign from within the GOP,” the *Journal* makes its case:

The Libertarians will offer a policy alternative to both candidates on free trade, and perhaps on taxes if Mr. Trump doesn’t clarify his position on taxing the rich. They’ll also contrast with the Republican on immigration....

Mr. Johnson isn’t likely to win a state, but he can still play a useful role by reminding the major-party candidates that they aren’t the only choices. Mr. Trump seems to think he can say whatever he wants because millions of voters are repelled by Mrs. Clinton. The Libertarians give these voters an honorable alternative if Mr. Trump makes himself unacceptable.

Also editorializing positively was the *Springfield Republican* of Massachusetts, under the headline “Can’t stand Trump, Clinton? Libertarian Party offers choice.” Sample: “if the Libertarian Party is ever going to get a real look from voters, this has been lining up to be the year.... Johnson and Weld will have been successful if they manage to get some libertarian notions into the conversation over the next five months.”

As Gary Johnson pointed out, the press attention the party has received has been unprecedented. And not just in terms of quantity.

On Friday, Scott Shackford reported that Google Trends had recorded more than 650 news articles the previous seven days, referencing the Libertarian Party (LP). That number, as

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The Libertarian ticket: a sane alternative to Trump or Clinton

An opportunity to pick a positive good, not just the lesser of two evils.

by David Boaz

Excerpted from *The Daily Beast*

Published on May 19, 2016

Lots of Republicans are looking for a sane alternative to Trump and Clinton, and it looks like the Libertarian Party (LP) has just given it to them, now that former Massachusetts governor William Weld has joined former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson’s ticket.

It’s the first time two governors have shared a presidential ticket since Dewey and Warren narrowly lost to incumbent President Truman in 1948.

Many observers think experience as a governor is the best preparation for the job of president. Johnson and Weld would bring 14 years of experience to the White House, while neither Trump nor Clinton has ever served as even mayor.

Johnson and Weld were both elected and re-elected in Democratic states, and dealt with heavily Democratic legislatures.

Neither Johnson nor Weld [adheres to every tenet of the Libertarian platform], and both have come under fire within the LP, which will nominate its candidates in Orlando over Memorial Day weekend. Johnson displeased many libertarians (including me) by saying that government should ban discrimination on the basis of religion, including requiring a Christian baker to bake and decorate a cake for a same-sex wedding. Weld has supported some gun control measures.

But they will present a clear alternative to Trump and Clinton: strong and coherent fiscal conservatism, social liberalism, drug-policy reform, criminal-justice reform, reining in mass surveillance, ending executive abuse of power, and a prudent foreign policy that is neither promiscuously interventionist nor erratic and bombastic—all grounded in a philosophical commitment to liberty and limited government.

They acted on those ideas as governors, with the usual accommodations to political reality. Johnson was called

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Welcoming new Libertarian Party monthly pledgers

Welcome to our many new Libertarian Party monthly pledgers, and a big “thanks” to those of you who recently renewed.

Normally, *Liberty Pledge* highlights a handful of our best media coverage from the previous month. But since the last issue, news coverage of our party, our candidates, and our nominating

convention have shattered all previous records.

So this month’s selection represents just a tiny fraction of the breakthrough coverage we’re seeing nationwide—on radio, television, in print, and on the Web.

The LP has also experienced a surge in membership growth and monthly

pledgers. The list of new and renewing pledgers normally takes up a portion of one column of this newsletter. But as you can see, new pledgers take up nearly a whole page of this issue.

We’re thrilled to have you on board as we ride the wave of what has already proven to be a breakthrough opportunity for the Libertarian Party. •

New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

Gary Abrahamson	Jonathan Fenwick	Kenneth Lierman	Richard Rigdon
Farez Alibay	John Ferrari	Brett Lillis	Monica Riojas
Stephen Allison	James Findlay	David Long	Tony Rodriguez
Girish Altekar	William Ford	Richard Longstreth	Wayne Rudolph
Loren Ameen	James Fornabai	Steven Lossing	Michael Rufo
Kenneth Anton	Jonathan Fosburgh	Mark Loud	Frank Rumbauskas
Francesco Artuso	Eric Francisconi	Bradley Lowry	Joseph Rynkiewicz
Tyler Ashe	Margaret Fries	Phoenix Lundstrom	David Sanders
Donna Askew	Dennis Frost	Shaun Macknyght	Michael Schmitt
Claude Atkins	Christian Galladora	Libby Madar	Brian Schnack
Peter Avery	Juan Garnica	Ray Mannion	Richard Schuster
Benjamin Bachrach	Dusty Gaunt	Bruce Marcus	Cherif Sedky
Wayne Barger	Lorenzo Gaztanaga	Richard Martin	Patrick Shockey
Jerilyn Barthel	William Gentile	Luis Martinez	Robin Sizemore
Mark Bartoli	Joshua Gilliland	Jayson May	B. Sandy Smith
Scott Baxter	Josiah Godbey	Lance McAskill	Kenneth Stacey
James Beebe	Rocky Goetz	Kelly McFarlane	Timothy Stage
Rex Bell	J. Goltman	David McGill	Richard Stalcup
Terry Bending	John Graham	Ryan McIntosh	Dylan Stephenson
Tom Berger	Michael Gwinn	Christopher McNamee	Charles Stevens
Scott Berkey	Peter Hahnstadt	Scott Merritt	Robert Stock
Robert Booth	Charles Hancock	BJ Mikkelsen	John Straigis
Steven Borjeson	Daniel Hawton	David Misisco	Glenn Swisher
Gary Brunner	Will Hayworth	Arcie Mizelle	Andrey Swystun
Ryan Burgett	Michael Heslin	Christopher Murphy	Randy Szabla
John Buttrick	Logan Hinkle	Chris Navta	Ben Szymanski
Robert Callahan	Richard Holden	Gary Neece	Debra Thalmueller-Johnson
Brandon Christensen	J. T. Hollister	Jeremy Nikel	Brett Thompson
Corey Collins	Justin Horrell	Andrew Niklawski	Anthony Toupin
Tyler Condon	Joseph Howard	Colin O’Kane	Colleen Trask
Bryan Cooper	Logan Howard	Mitchell Olinger	Lorence Trick
James Corona	Larry Hutchison	Jason Overstreet	Cyndi Vandiver
Matthew Corriere	David Issa	Rob Paige	Daniel Vasconcellos
John Cosby	Joshua Job	Gary Patterson	Kevin Vicario
David Crimmins	Michael Johnson	David Perry	Jeff Vincent
Joshua Crumley	Richard Jones	Joseph Perry	Arvin Vohra
Deja Crutcher	T. M. Kluz	Pavel Piarvou	Matthew Walker
Dan Culton	Craig Konkle	Robert Pierucci	David Westbrook
Jacqualine Davis	Milan Kresovic	Pamela Potter	Christopher Wieman
Cameron DeJong	Dennis Kriha	Mark Prescott	Dustin Williams
Eric Duhon	Barry Kruse	Dana P’Simer	Timothy Williams
Daniel Dykstra	Michael Kruse	Nicholas Reardon	Chad Wolett
Randal Eberle	Howard Lambert	Joshua Reed	Douglas Wood
Richard Eddings	David Lamont	Michael Remington	Eric Wright
Nicholas Epstein	William Lang	Nick Richards	Adam Zimmerman
Bill Felton	Kathleen LaVallee	Jerry Richardson	Brett Zuniga

Johnson–Weld an honorable alternative

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of today, is more than 2,000. Quite a bit of it positive, too, as in this *Washington Post* headline: “This year’s Libertarian ticket has remarkable political experience.” *Yahoo! Finance* offers up: “The Libertarian Johnson–Weld Ticket is Bad News for Donald Trump.” More respectful treatment can be found at the *Boston Globe*, *Bloomberg View*, and on and on.

At *Forbes*, John Zogby makes the intriguing case that Snake People Millennials could be ripe for the Libertarian pickin’:

They will decide the outcome in 2016. Donald Trump’s support is miniscule among this group and Clinton does not generate any enthusiasm among younger voters because she appears to many to be a combination of too establishment and too disingenuous. Even though Bernie Sanders most likely will endorse and campaign for Clinton, as will President Obama, who received large support among young voters in 2008 and 2012, they still may not vote in significant enough numbers. To be sure, many will hold their nose and vote for Clinton because of their fear of a Trump victory. But the real question is, will there be enough excitement to get Millennials out to vote. While early reports on the Libertarian ticket of former [governors] Johnson and Weld suggest that they may draw votes away from Trump, I think they may actually hurt Clinton even more....

Johnson and Weld just may have the most compelling message for Millennials. They are running as fiscal conservative purists and can draw from a group deeply concerned about both college and public debt. [They] are social libertarians: pro-choice, anti-government meddling in matters of personal privacy [and] most drugs, and they oppose U.S. meddling in foreign adventures and war. These young people are diverse and less inclined to see other peoples and cultures as the “other.”

One source of perhaps unlikely support is hawkish *Washington Post* conservative Jennifer Rubin, who is arguing not

for voting for the LP nominees, but for the media to give them an appropriately robust level of coverage:

1. *Johnson–Weld should be included in all major polling, especially since 15 percent is required to get into the presidential debates.*
2. *In figuring out how to balance air time, the media rightly complains Hillary Clinton is not available nearly as much as Trump. That excuse, however, does not wash with Johnson–Weld, who should be interviewed on a regular basis.*
3. *In treating Johnson–Weld as normal candidates, the media should press for positions on key issues. What do they plan to do about the Islamic State? If they cannot get a flat tax, what sort of reform do they favor? If they disband the Education Department, should federal funding for schools disappear? What drugs would they legalize? In other words, treating them as serious candidates requires serious questions.*

“The least the media can do is not prejudice the result nor prevent two perfectly qualified, accomplished governors from making their case to the voters.”
 –Jennifer Rubin, *Washington Post*

More in that vein here, including this kicker: “The least the media can do is not prejudice the result nor prevent two perfectly qualified, accomplished governors from making their case to the voters.”

Has there been some negative press? Oh, you betcha. But as Johnson pointed out during the Libertarian National Convention, the amount of press attention has been unprecedented. And not just in terms of quantity.•

I would like to make a one-time donation to the LP:

- \$5,000 \$100
- \$1,000 \$50
- \$500 \$25
- \$250 _____ Other

I would like to increase my monthly pledge to this level:

- \$2,500 \$100
- \$1,000 \$50
- \$500 \$30
- \$250 _____ Other
(minimum \$10)

(Please make checks payable to **Libertarian Party**.)

Please bill my Visa MasterCard AmEx Discover

Card number: _____ Exp.: _____

Name on card: _____

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

Occupation*: _____

Employer*: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

* Federal law requires us to use our best efforts to collect and report the name, mailing address, occupation, and name of employer of individuals whose contributions exceed \$200 in a calendar year. Political contributions are not tax-deductible.

New Jersey Libertarian Party demands Christie commute sentences of nonviolent drug offenders

Excerpted from the *Bergen Dispatch*

Published on May 1, 2016

The New Jersey Libertarian Party (LPNJ) demands Governor Christie immediately commute the sentences of prisoners whose only offense involved nonviolent drug offenses. At a time where the N.J. state budget must be cut, we cannot afford to imprison people who have not harmed anyone.

According to the State Dept. of Corrections, there are 2,360 inmates being held for nonviolent drug offenses. Another 664 prisoners are being held for “violations against public policy.” At an average cost of \$54,865 per [year], these prisoners are held at [an] annual cost of over \$165 million, or \$450,000 per day. New Jersey already has the highest debt burden in America, at \$52,300 per taxpayer.

Among these prisoners is Jon Peditto, sentenced to 8 years in jail just for growing 18 marijuana plants. Governor Christie, you have a chance before you leave office to correct the injustice done to Jon and many others like him.

The LPNJ has opposed the War on Drugs since [LPNJ’s] founding in 1972. Now, 45 years later, a majority of Americans favor re-legalizing marijuana.

“The war on drugs has ruined and continues to ruin countless

lives,” [Peter Rohrman, the Libertarian candidate for Bergen County Freeholder, told the *Dispatch*]. “Nonviolent drug offenders are removed from their families and incarcerated alongside murders and rapists, in an attempt to ‘cure’ them of habits the government deems self-destructive. Fatigued taxpayers are bled even further to finance this mass incarceration. Police resources are squandered on chasing down nonviolent drug offenders, when their time should be spent on more important things. The job of the police is to protect us from bad people—not to protect us from ourselves. Ending the failed war on drugs will do much to alleviate an already overburden[ed] court system.”

“[The] government has no right to legislate morality. Dictating what people are allowed to medicate or recreate with is beyond their intended purpose. Governments should have limits. People should have freedom,” said Rohrman.

“You want to destroy the Mexican drug cartels? Start by re-legalizing cannabis in the United States. Overnight, you will eliminate their market.

“We ask Governor Christie to do the right thing: *Let our people go!*”•

This interview was prompted by a press release issued by the New Jersey Libertarian Party.

LP ticket a sane alternative

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“America’s boldest governor” by the *Economist* for his push for school choice. He vetoed more than 700 spending and regulation bills and left the state with a \$1 billion surplus. Weld cut taxes, constrained state spending, and created a domestic partners program for gay state employees.

In Cato’s *Fiscal Policy Report Card on America’s Governors*, both Johnson and Weld earned As and Bs, each time they were graded.

Leading Republicans such as Mitt Romney and Sen. Ben Sasse of Nebraska have declared Trump unfit for the presidency and called for an alternative candidate [but no] one has stepped forward, and ballot deadlines are looming.

But now there’s an alternative they could support.

Libertarians are not conservatives. They’re not just Republicans repulsed by Trump’s racial and religious scapegoating and megalomania. The LP platform has supported drug legalization and gay marriage for decades, and the party opposes most U.S. wars. But given what Sasse, Romney, and other serious Republicans think of Trump and Clinton, is it hard to imagine that they would prefer Johnson and Weld in the White House?

None of this means there’s a real path to the White House for Johnson and Weld. I suspect that in their fantasies, Libertarian Party strategists imagine the ticket carrying Johnson’s New Mexico, Romney’s Utah, and maybe libertarian-leaning states

such as Alaska, Idaho, and New Hampshire. Add in Maine, and you could imagine the race being thrown into the House of Representatives. Where rational Republicans just might prefer an experienced governor to the unpredictable Trump.

But neither Johnson nor Weld is a celebrity on the order of Trump or Ross Perot, the businessman who got 19 percent of the national vote running as an independent in 1992. Neither has the money of Perot, the Koch brothers, or Tom Steyer—the kind of money that can buy national television ads and large staffs. Johnson has not yet shown an ability to draw huge crowds, as Bernie Sanders has this year and Ron Paul did in 2008.

Without those things, you can’t become a serious candidate. Johnson has already hit 10 percent in a couple of polls, but right now that’s probably a “none of the above” vote. He still has to convert it into actual support.

The LP’s most successful campaign, in 1980, featured an accomplished candidate, a relatively large, professional staff, and a VP candidate, David Koch, who put millions of dollars into the campaign. They still only got 1 percent. Johnson and Weld have a steep hill to climb.

But Trump and Clinton are the least popular major-party nominees in memory. In some polls a majority of voters say they’d like to vote for someone else. That’s the golden opportunity awaiting some alternative candidate, and it looks increasingly as if Gary Johnson will be the only alternative on all 50 ballots. •