Gary Johnson warns political establishment: Libertarians ‘disrupting the two-party duopoly’

by Jennnifer Harper
Excerpted from the Washington Times
Published on July 6, 2016

The Libertarian Party made a big noise in the nation’s capital [this week]. Libertarian presidential nominee Gary Johnson and his running mate, Bill Weld, descended on the National Press Club for a sold-out public event broadcast live on C-SPAN. The two former governors outlined—very clearly—why their third-party effort is more likely to succeed this year than in past elections. Persistent voter disenchantment with establishment politics is a significant factor.

“We are becoming factors in the presidential campaign that can no longer be ignored. We are already disrupting the two-party duopoly—and neither Donald Trump nor Hillary Clinton is happy about it. Americans are ready for a third way. As they learn about us and the small-government, greater-freedom principles we offer, more and more voters are, indeed, saying, ‘I’m in,’” says Mr. Johnson, who ran for the White House in 2012 and snagged 1.2 million votes with a minimum of public outreach.

Times have changed since then. The Johnson–Weld campaign has [a] formal fundraising apparatus in place, a spiffy new video, and a full calendar of public appearances. A Morning Consult poll released [on July 5] found Mr. Johnson with 11 percent of the vote; Mr. Trump garnered 37 percent; Mrs. Clinton, 38 percent. The Libertarian candidate, however, has his eye fixed on 15 percent—which would qualify him to participate in the sanctioned, nationally televised presidential debates, just over two months off.

“The key is to reach 15 percent consistently in these major national polls. Fifteen percent makes it very difficult, if not impossible, for the Commission on Presidential Debates to exclude Bill Weld and me from the debates this fall,” Mr. Johnson reasons.

The small-business appeal of the Libertarian Party

by Jeremy Quittner
Excerpted from Fortune
Published on July 7, 2016

An emerging party could cause trouble for both Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

Gary Johnson won only 1 percent of the vote when he ran as the Libertarian candidate for president in 2012. The former New Mexico governor is gaining traction in this chaotic election season, particularly among business owners.

With a strong pro-business message, Johnson could eventually emerge as the candidate who grabs votes from either former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton or real-estate magnate Donald Trump, the presumptive [nominees], political analysts say.

He and his vice-presidential running mate, Bill Weld, the former governor of Massachusetts, are likely to appeal particularly to Republicans uncomfortable with the populist campaign Trump has mounted. Not only are they social liberals and fiscal conservatives, they espouse views traditionally associated with moderate Republican candidates on the economy, such as favoring international trade agreements and reducing the national debt.

As such, they also have an appeal to entrepreneurs who want to voice a protest vote against Trump, whose platform currently includes deportation of undocumented immigrants and banning of Muslim immigrants, punishing companies that invest in operations overseas, and a trade war with countries such as China and Mexico.

“It is the first time the Libertarian ticket will have more government experience than the Republican ticket, and that is astonishing,” says Stan Veuger, a resident scholar and economist at the American Enterprise Institute, a conservative think tank in Washington, D.C.

Johnson was most recently the chief executive of a company called Cannabis Sativa, which produces pot-based oils for treatment of health issues. Weld had high favorability ratings from state businesses during his two terms as governor of Massachusetts in the 1990s, for cutting taxes and pushing welfare recipients into work programs, among other things.

Such experience matters to Clint Greenleaf, co-founder and chief executive of HomePlate Peanut Butter, a four-employee company in Texas. Greenleaf, a serial entrepreneur, describes

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Is this Gary Johnson/Bill Weld spot the greatest presidential ad ever?

LBJ’s Daisy, Nixon’s “Crime,” Dukakis’s “Snoopy” tank ride, you’ve got competition.

by Nick Gillespie
Excerpted from Reason’s HIT & RUN Blog
Published on June 30, 2016

Libertarian Party presidential nominee Gary Johnson and his running mate, Bill Weld, have released a masterful ad that touts their impressive records as two-term governors (of New Mexico and Mass., respectively) while drawing sharp distinctions among their positions and those of Clinton and Trump.

This is hands-down powerful, powerful stuff and highlights Johnson’s interest in capturing what he calls the “broad middle” of Americans who are socially liberal, fiscally conservative, and desperate for “small, efficient government” that gets core tasks done without blowing up the budget to pad the payrolls of favored businesses, bomb and drone foreign countries into the Stone Age, and strangle us all in regulatory red tape.

[Gov. Gary Johnson introduced the video via Twitter, asking], “Are you in? Check out our new video—and spread it around. #election2016 #TeamGov,” [on] June 29.

Take a look and comment it up.*
‘Babes of Liberty’ want to break the Internet, too
All in the service of encouraging you to vote Libertarian, of course

By Elizabeth Nolan Brown
Excerpted from Reason’s HIT & RUN Blog
Published on July 2, 2016

Their message is simple: Vote Libertarian. Inspired by the trending “Trump Girls,” who “broke the Internet” [the week of June 27], a bevy of liberty-minded women have been snapping and sharing selfies that support peace, freedom, and the Libertarian Party presidential ticket. These “babes of liberty”—that’s the name you can find them under on Twitter and Instagram—join a growing number of Gary Johnson and William Weld supporters across the country.

To spread the love for Johnson and other LP candidates, New Yorker Rachel Maisonet invited more than 200 women (and a few men) into a private Facebook group for “Lovely Liberty Ladies,” urging them to [submit] a photo of themselves promoting libertarianism. By Friday [July 1], group members had pitched in to launch “Babes of Liberty” accounts on social media—the Twitter account has more than 1,000 followers already—and were avidly sharing bios, beliefs, and shots with one another on Facebook.

If the goal is to garner #TrumpGirlsBreakTheInternet-level attention, the Babes of Liberty may have a ways to go. But if bringing together a bunch of bold, smart, and passionate libertarian women from around the United States was Maisonet’s goal, she’s already succeeded beautifully.

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

- $5,000
- $1,000
- $500
- $250
- ______ Other

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

- $2,500
- $1,000
- $500
- $250
- ______ Other

(Name of individuals whose contributions exceed $200 in a calendar year. Political contributions are not tax-deductible.)
Gary Johnson beating Trump among African–Americans, neck-and-neck among millennials, in new battleground state poll
Wisconsin at an overall 16 percent especially strong for the Libertarian ticket

by Brian Doherty
Excerpted from Reason’s HIT & RUN Blog
Published on June 30, 2016

A newly released poll by Greenberg Quinlan Rosner, done for a couple of Democratic Party-associated operations, covered nine battleground states and has some encouraging and/or just interesting results for Libertarian Gary Johnson. The survey was of 2700 likely voters and was conducted from June 11–20.

Across those nine states (Arizona, Florida, Michigan, Nevada, North Carolina, Ohio, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin), some big-picture stuff:

• Clinton 45 percent, Trump 38, Johnson 11
• Johnson beats Trump among African–Americans, 7 percent to 5
• Johnson beats his overall 11 percent average slightly with Hispanics, with 12 percent
• Johnson neck-and-neck with Trump with millennials, Wisconsin at an overall 16 percent especially strong for the Libertarian ticket

himself as a fiscal conservative who has tended to vote Republican over the years, but who has recently become a Libertarian.

This year, however, he finds himself disappointed with the negative tone of the presidential campaign, as well as the prospect of voting for either Clinton or Trump. Specifically, Greenleaf disapproves of Clinton’s big government philosophy and the controversies swirling around her. But he also dislikes the grandiosity and wavering inconsistencies of Trump, on everything from immigration to taxes.

The policies put forth by Johnson and Weld, plus their collective experience governing their home states, are likely to win his vote.

“I think the biggest thing is their ability to work across the aisle,” Greenleaf says. “They were both Republican governors in blue states.”

Johnson and Weld are long-shots, political analysts say. Yet they could attract enough voters to make things difficult for either Trump or Clinton, where according to at least one recent poll, the Democrat and Republican tie at 35 percent, with Johnson garnering 13 percent of the vote.

They’ve staked out positions that business owners tend to favor. Johnson, the former governor of a state that bordered Mexico, a U.S. trading partner that Trump regularly maligns, favors a more open immigration policy that would allow undocumented immigrants to get work visas to fill jobs that U.S. workers don’t want.

He would reduce the federal debt and deficit by cutting federal spending. On taxes, always a top concern for entrepreneurs, Johnson would abolish the Internal Revenue Service, and ultimately eliminate the corporate tax, which in turn could create millions of new jobs, Johnson says. Johnson and Weld appeal to entrepreneurs because they seem to be a saner alternative to Trump, says Philip Wallach, a senior fellow in governance studies at Brookings Institution, a centrist think tank.

“Part of this is just Trump being such a wild card, which might potentially be off-putting to many small business owners who worry about economic uncertainty and instability threatening their businesses,” Wallach says.

That certainly rings true for Jeff Koenig, owner of the business consulting firm Open Four Business, in Manhattan, Kansas. A registered Republican who says he has also voted for centrist Democrats, he respects Trump’s business acumen, but he says he has no idea what Trump stands for politically. And that troubles him. He also won’t vote for Clinton, whom he says he views as a “corrupt” career politician.

Like Greenleaf, he’s leaning toward Johnson and Weld.

“I don’t entirely agree with…Libertarianism,” Koenig says. “By voting for the Libertarian Party [this year], I would be voting for more common-sense level-headedness.”

“There’s more to it than meets the eye.”