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...
New and renewing Liberty Pledgers

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Roberto Aguayo  
Danielle Alexandre  
Girish Altekar  
Vince Amoriello  
Claude Atkins  
Anna Ballard  
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Michael Bramson  
Sarah Brancato  
Gregory Brown  
Keith Bumgarner  
Brent Burchwell  
Frank Burns  
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Paul Chapman  
Lisa Clizbe  
Robert Copeland  
Sally Cox  
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Ian Cross  
Kristoffer Crozier  
William Curry  
Marian Dalton  
Kerry Daniel

Leigh DeVo  
Jill Doggett  
James Edgar  
Brian Ehret  
Caren Ermel  
David Fautheree  
Bruce Fleming  
Kimberly Flewallen  
Steven Flewallen  
James Fornabai  
Brian Fuller  
June Genis  
Jonathan Gentsch  
John Gillen  
John Gillespie  
Kevin Glasco  
Jason Glazer  
Amanda Gratia  
Jeffery Harris  
Andrew Hastings  
Michael Hetrick  
Steven Hoffman  
Jason Hollister  
Stanley Howard  
Christopher Howick  
John Huber  
Ryan Huffman  
David Hunt  
Matthew Hunter  
John Jacobson  
Eric Johnson  
Bruce Jones  
Leigh Kelly  
Virginia Kenyon  
Michael Kidd  
Michael Kielsky  
James King  
Matthew Kofron  
Ken Kolchier  
Craig Kollai  
Zachary LaMotte  
Marhsall Lee  
Edward Leonard  
Jonelle Lewis  
William Lockert  
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Carissa Pierson  
John Redding  
Mark Reynolds  
Jake Rninger  
Robert Roberts  
Kahlil Robinson  
Eric Rudie  
Christopher Ryan  
Sean Ryan  
David McKee  
Lawrence Samuels  
Michael Sandridge  
Tim Schwartz  
Callie Smith  
Christopher Smith  
Alexander Snitker  
Kieth Stanley  
Kenneth Stansbury  
Michael Stein  
Robert Stock  
Richard Stubbs  
John Thomson  
Joshua Toinhka  
Vincent Venturini  
Patricia Ver Schneider  
Jennifer Vincent  
Steven Wainio  
Luke Walker  
John Walton  
Irving Welchons  
Joseph West  
Rachel Wills  
Justin Wójciszaw  
William Yeniscavich

continued on page 3
Jacobin: Johnson too fiscally conservative
continued from page 2

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).

Johnson always put the onus on public programs to justify their existing. And few programs passed his muster.

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. •
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 Republicans 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... we firmly support his devotion to free trade, states’ rights, and other conservative principles.”

—Cornell Republicans, in their statement endorsing Johnson

Johnson could change outcome

continued from page 1

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.” •