

MATTHEW HOY OCTOBER 29, 2016 4:15 PM

Libertarian Party not benefiting from public distaste of Trump, Clinton



Former New Mexico governor, Libertarian presidential candidate Gary Johnson shakes hands as he arrives for a campaign rally Thursday, Aug. 25, 2016, in Concord, N.H. **Jim Cole** - Associated Press



BY MATTHEW HOY

This should've been a big year for the Libertarian Party.

Voters looking at the two major parties see the two most unappealing choices in history. With the Republican Party nominating a tiny-fingered misogynistic narcissist and the Democrats nominating a criminal grifter with the personality of a robot, there was an opening for one of the so-called minor parties.

It was something [San Luis Obispo Libertarian Party](#) Chairwoman [Gail Lightfoot](#) hoped would happen. If Lightfoot's name seems familiar, it might be because you've seen it on your ballot. Lightfoot has been the [California Libertarian Party's](#) nominee for U.S. Senate for much of the past two decades and she ran for secretary of state three times; her name has appeared 14 times on the statewide ballot.

A former Republican who campaigned for [Barry Goldwater](#) in 1964, Lightfoot was a charter member of the Libertarian Party when it formed in 1972.

As a disgruntled "Never Trump" conservative and former Republican, the Libertarian Party would seem to be a reasonable redoubt from which I could fight for post-Trump conservatism. The theme of the 2016 convention was "legalize freedom," and its [website boasts](#) that "Libertarians strongly oppose any government interference into their personal, family, and business decisions."

But over the past several months, it appears that Libertarians have nominated a couple of former Republican governors of largely Democratic states — Gov. [Gary Johnson](#) of New Mexico for president and Gov. [William Weld](#) of Massachusetts for vice president — who sound an awful lot like Democrats.

Johnson has expressed hostility to state-level laws modeled after the federal [Religious Freedom Restoration Act](#). The law, which nowadays draws the ire of Democrats everywhere, was championed by President Bill Clinton and introduced in the House by then-New York Rep. [Chuck Schumer](#). It was so uncontroversial that it passed the House on a voice vote and the Senate by a vote of 97-3.

[Johnson has proposed a carbon tax](#), because a tax is a "free-market" approach to solving climate change.

I'm not sure what's worse: That Johnson misunderstands what a tax is or that he misunderstands what the free market is.

He also has displayed a bizarre [aversion to the term "illegal immigrant"](#) and [praised Barack Obama's extra-constitutional executive orders](#) effectively legalizing thousands of people here in violation of immigration law.

Weld isn't much better when it comes to basic Libertarianism, expressing an aversion to the Second Amendment by [calling AR-15s "weapons of mass destruction,"](#) and saying handguns might be "even worse."

Asked about the disconnect between what the Libertarian Party preaches and the policy positions of Johnson and Weld, Lightfoot said, "He's not a pure Libertarian."

By taking the anti-First Amendment position that conservative Christians can't decline to take part in gay marriage ceremonies (whatever happened to "if you oppose gay marriage, don't have one?"), Johnson sounds a lot like a culture-warrior Democrat.

"Instead of saying property rights prevail, he doesn't know how to answer," Lightfoot said. The 2016 election has meant the Libertarian Party is being treated with some of the same seriousness and depth of questioning that had largely been limited to Democrats and Republicans.

"We've been running on generalities for 44 years," Lightfoot said.

When Johnson ran for president in 2012, "he didn't have to be specific."

Now he does.

So why should people vote Libertarian?

"We really need someone in the White House who is not a radical in any direction," Lightfoot said. "Johnson and Weld basically are still Republicans; they have a lot of Democratic friends. They just really are a hybrid."

"They offer an opportunity for everyone to work together," she said.

This was the Libertarian Party's year. Instead, it hasn't happened. Lightfoot blames the Libertarian Party calendar — Johnson and Weld weren't nominated until May, months after both Republicans and Democrats had earned plenty of media coverage during their primary campaigns.

Press Lightfoot on what Election Day holds for the Libertarian Party, and she describes an electoral map where Johnson and Weld capture their home states of New Mexico and Massachusetts, and conservative [independent Evan McMullin wins Utah](#), denying both Clinton and Trump an electoral college majority and throwing the contest to the House of Representatives.

There, she thinks Johnson might have a chance. However, statewide polling in [Massachusetts](#) and [New Mexico](#) paint the scenario as a long-shot, at least as it regards the Libertarians.

However, in [Utah](#), one recent statewide poll has [McMullin leading Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump](#) there. It's very possible that McMullin could become the first minor-party candidate to capture electoral votes since 1968.

Californians disgusted by Clinton and Trump can [write in McMullin's name](#) on their ballot and it will count.

As for the Libertarian Party, many will be holding out hope that Johnson and Weld can garner 5 percent of the popular vote this year. That would qualify the party for some federal funding in the 2020 election.

Ironically, it's the sort of government program that the Libertarian Party would like to eventually get rid of — at least on that, I'm with them.

Conservative columnist Matthew Hoy is a former reporter, editor and page designer. His column appears in The Tribune every other Sunday, in rotation with liberal columnist Tom Fulks. Read Hoy's blog at [www.Hoystory.com](#). Follow him on Twitter [@Hoystory](#).

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Rodger Avalanchier · Morro Bay, California
This year offered the Libertarian Party an opportunity to ride into the mainstream. The Libertarians bungled that chance by saddling Gov. Gary Johnson.
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David Ciaffardini
History shows liberals pretty much get things right. They were right about Nixon, correct about Vietnam, correct about the invasion of Iraq and the scam about weapons of mass destruction, correct about Oliver North, correct about George Bush, correct about global warming, correct about air pollution, correct about environmental destruction, correct about slavery, correct about civil rights, correct about allowing women to vote, correct about Trump.
Time for Trump supporters to grab a clue and get real.
Like · Reply · Nov 1, 2016 4:49pm

David Ciaffardini
The bottom line is that any person or organization that cares about the well-being of the U.S. Constitution, the U.S. economy, international relations, democracy, patriotism and justice will want to make sure that Clinton prevails.
There is only a small chance that Trump can win the election, but that possibility is already freaking out the stock market and harming our economy. If Trump wins, expect recession, depression and war at home and abroad. Trump = Death. Trump = Crime. Trump = injustice.
Look at Trump's record of action: he cheats his employees, doesn't pay debts, and, by his own words, doesn't respect anyone other than himself. The guy is an absolute maniac and won't mind bringing the whole world down with him as his ego bloats and his soul shrivels.
It is more important than ever that voters come out in droves to let the world know that most American's find Trump unfit for any duty that involves service to others.
Like · Reply · Nov 1, 2016 2:06pm · Edited

Chris Temple · Atascadero High
That's because the "libertarian" candidate is a politically correct hack.
Donald Trump is the outsider. He's having to run against Hillary and the Democrats, the media (present company included), and the ruling Republican establishment.
Matthew, you've conseeded to the Democrats' guilt-trip, probably for the same reasons you haven't clued-in on Johnson's PC mindset. Try tuning out the noise. Listen to what Trump says, not what the media says he says. You'll find you've been fooled.
Besides, you just don't look the pot-smoking type, and, "tiny-fingered," childish.
Like · Reply · Oct 31, 2016 8:44pm

David Ciaffardini
Trump lies and cheats the working man and, by his own words, doesn't have respect for anyone but himself. Trump is literally a maniac in the same mold as the worst villains in any super hero comic book. We've been warned. Voting for Trump is like being a suicide bomber. Trump = Death.
Like · Reply · Nov 1, 2016 2:10pm

Chris Temple · Atascadero High
David Ciaffardini, That's a little dramatic there girlfriend. Maybe you should slow down on the cheap novels and the TV vampire shows.
Like · Reply · Nov 1, 2016 2:26pm

David Ciaffardini
Chris Temple: Chris, with your hypocritical, bullying, sexist, mysogynist language, you're a perfect example of the infection that Trump feeds and spreads.
Only if someone wants more bullying, more hypocrisy, more sexist, mysogynist attacks in our community and nation should anyone dare vote for the maniac Donald Trump. Pretty much everything about Trump is ugly and rude and he promises to make America more ugly and rude. (While continuing to refuse to pay people he owes.) He also lies about giving to charity. How low will a person go!
You have not been able to make a cogent argument to support your dangerous, illogical stance. May God grant you the grace to recognize the error of your ways.
Like · Reply · Nov 1, 2016 4:11pm · Edited

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Gail Lightfoot · County Chair [SLO] at Libertarian Party of California
Nothing written is not what I said to Michael. Some may take exception to calling Johnson/Weld Republicans rather than Libertarians but lots of Libertarians will agree. So, it is fair to say they are not 100% or "pure" Libertarians. However, they do offer a choice that will allow the two so-called opposite sides of the aisle in Congress to work towards a balance budget and correct many of the 'mistakes' made in Washington that prevent balancing the budget.
Like · Reply · Oct 31, 2016 1:45pm · Edited

Raymond Benning · Atlanta, Georgia
The world seems to be in such a mess because truth doesn't seem to matter any longer.
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Matt Bianco · Works at Add a work
Some people cannot understand how a carbon fee works, including Hump. If you take your pickup truck to the dump, they charge you a disposal fee. However, you can dump CO2 and other pollutants into the atmosphere, and it is free. The fee is avoidable if you capture your CO2 on your own property, much like hoarding junk in your property and not taking it to the dump. That makes it a fee, and not a tax. It is no different than the town upstream dumping its sewage into the river, which is your source of drinking water. Paying a fee to dispose of carbon IS therefore a free market approach. And the fee should be paid by those who consume the goods that lead to emissions. Consumers can either pay the fee, or choose to consume alternatives with smaller or no fees. Likewise, companies can avoid passing on the carbon fee to the consumer by capturing it or trading it. This is pure free market. But like most republicans, facts get in the way.
Like · Reply · Oct 29, 2016 11:24pm

Matthew Hoy · Works at Professional Annoyer of Liberals
Carbon Dioxide is not a pollutant. It's plant food.
Like · Reply · Oct 31, 2016 12:03pm

Russ Byler · Upper Management at Cathouse
A fee is just a tax in disguise.
Like · Reply · Oct 31, 2016 8:14pm

Rodger Avalanchier · Morro Bay, California
Matthew Hoy, so is fertilizer
Like · Reply · Nov 1, 2016 5:42pm

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Pa Robert
The third party candidates get outsized attention despite their terrible candidates. Gary "Aleppo" Johnson almost makes Trump look competent. Stein is even worse.
HRC may not be my ideal candidate but she smokes all the others - which is more of a condemnation of the others considering all her baggage.
The race is tight and any vote for third party is a vote for Trump. Don't do it.
Like · Reply · Oct 29, 2016 9:37pm

Jim Lewis · Atlanta, Georgia
Their platform does NOT represent what most of the voters want. No border control, no drug control, no public schools, supply-side economic policies (lead to boom and bust cycles)...who's going to vote for that? The libertarian policy fails to learn from the past blaming government for everything while placing corporations and individuals blameless for the current financial mess we find ourselves in as a nation.
Like · Reply · Oct 29, 2016 6:39pm

June Genis · WORKS at Retired
You clearly have NOT read the Johnson/Weld platform at [www.JohnsonWeld.com](#). I suggest you do before you say anything else this stupid. As Lightfoot says, Johnson was chosen BECAUSE he is Libertarian-lite and has a limited agenda.
Like · Reply · Oct 30, 2016 9:38am

Gail Lightfoot · County Chair [SLO] at Libertarian Party of California
June Genis Thanks!
Like · Reply · Oct 31, 2016 1:37pm

Jim Lewis · Atlanta, Georgia
Stupid huh? I guess you haven't read the Libertarian platform .org. It's your party's platform that is stupid!
Like · Reply · Nov 2, 2016 7:51am

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ABOUT MATTHEW HOY

Matthew Hoy, a conservative, is a San Diego-area native and 1994 graduate of Cal Poly's journalism program. He spent 15 years at various newspapers along the West Coast, including The Lompoc Record, The Daily World in Aberdeen, Wash., The North County Times in Escondido and The San Diego Union-Tribune. For 15 years, Hoy has written a blog on politics and the media, [Hoystory.com](#). Hoy's column will be published in The Tribune every other week, in rotation with liberal columnist Tom Fulks.

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