



No warm welcome for Bill Weld

Ex-Bay State gov booed by Libertarians

Antonio Planas and Jordan Graham

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Former Bay State Gov. William F. Weld's vice presidential bid is off to a rocky start at the Libertarian National Convention in Orlando, Fla., where his running mate's suggestion that he is "the original Libertarian" drew boos from a hostile crowd of delegates who are preparing to select the party's No. 2 today.

"The clear view of many delegates is that Weld does not have a Libertarian DNA," said Jonathan Turley, a Libertarian-leaning constitutional law professor at George Washington University. "The common denominator among Libertarians is this fierce independence — not just independence in the party, but with their own thinking."

Although he wasn't willing to predict whether Weld will secure the party's VP nod today, Turley said it is clear the former Republican governor has been "having serious trouble" at the convention.

His anticipated running mate, Libertarian front-runner and former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson, drew a smattering of boos Friday when he described Weld as the "original Libertarian."

David Boaz, executive vice president of the Cato Institute, a think tank with a focus on libertarian principles, said Weld's lack of time to prepare and time away from politics have contributed to his struggles.

"It's kind of obvious ... Weld hasn't been campaigning anywhere for 15 years," Boaz said, adding that Weld has "never campaigned in a boiling cauldron of actual Libertarians."

Despite the turbulence at the convention, Boaz said Johnson's decision to select Weld as his running mate has given the party its best chance to secure as many popular votes as possible — and that a Johnson-Weld ticket could give the party a real foothold in the general election.

Libertarian delegates will select their presidential and vice presidential candidates separately.

Weld's lack of name recognition, Boaz said, is also adding to his troubles.

"The guy parachuting in from the New York law firm and the Republican Party really has to sell himself to those delegates," Boaz said. "Libertarians have to do all their politicking and all of

their learning right there at the convention. A lot of Libertarian Party members probably never heard of William Weld until last week.”

But Massachusetts delegates to the convention — many of whom say they back Weld — described the former governor’s opposition as a vocal, but small group.

“There always is a set of vocal Libertarian delegates who want a principled, ideological candidate,” said Rene Ruiz, a Bay State delegate who said he will be voting for Weld today. “There’s always going to be part of the party that won’t support someone with more pragmatic positions.”

Ruiz said he will cast his vote for Weld because he has the name, the fundraising and the campaign prowess to succeed in the general election.

Ruiz also predicted the high disapproval ratings of Democratic front-runner Hillary Clinton and Republican nominee Donald Trump are setting his party up “for what could be an unprecedented showing.”