

## **Gary Johnson Has A Seemingly Tenuous Relationship With Libertarian Ideals**

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The presidential nominee for the Libertarian Party is not all he claims to be, according to recent reports.

Some of the main tenants of Libertarian ideology, as described on the Libertarian Party's [website](#), are personal liberty, fiscal responsibility of government, self-ownership, and self-determination. Former New Mexico Governor and candidate for president Gary Johnson allegedly does not embody all of these principles.

Critics point to the fact that during his tenure as Governor of New Mexico (1995-2003), he [increased](#) the debt from \$2.7 billion to \$3.9 billion, [according](#) to Reason.

"Increasing government debt is not Libertarian," Dr. Mark Thornton, Senior Fellow at the [Mises Institute](#), told The Daily Caller News Foundation in an email.

However, since New Mexico had a Democratic state legislature during Johnson's tenure, some say it may not all be his fault.

"A cursory review of New Mexico's budgets during his tenure does reveal an increase in spending and debt," Todd Haggerty, Chairman of the Capital District Libertarian Party of New York, told TheDCNF.

"But I cannot say that those spending increase were the result of initiatives enacted or supported by Governor Johnson or if such measures were enacted by the State's Legislature which was heavily Democratic at the time."

Brian Doherty, senior editor of Reason magazine notes in a May article, "what New Mexico spent during his administration was somewhat, but by no means ultimately, up to him."

Johnson also [claims](#) that Libertarian philosophy is "fiscally conservative and socially liberal," but Thornton says that falls short of actual libertarianism.

"You have to remember that Johnson and Weld are Republicans flying the Libertarian banner," Thornton says. "They are fiscally conservative and socially liberal for Republicans which is great, but they fall short of Libertarian. They are both good status quo managers."

"Fiscally conservative and socially liberal is not my definition of libertarian," David Boaz, executive vice president of the Cato Institute, told The DCNF.

However, Boaz does go on to say that “it’s a description that I’ve used to explain the libertarian perspective to journalists and broader audiences. It’s a good, quick shorthand.”

One of the more outrageous positions Johnson has advocated for, was to ban burqas, something many feel stands in direct contrast to the personal liberty and self-determination components of the Libertarian platform. Johnson did retract the burqa statement.

“Individuals should be free to make choices for themselves,” the Libertarian platform reads on their website. “No individual, group, or government may initiate force against any other individual, group, or government.”

“You have got to be kidding me,” Thornton exclaimed.

“The Libertarian Party stands for the rights of all people all of the time,” Nicholas Sarwark, Libertarian National Committee Chairman, told TheDCNF. “That obviously includes freedom to practice one’s religion however one chooses, again, as long as you’re not hurting other people.”

Johnson said of the misstep, “Having had time to consider, my response was wrong. As with many well-intentioned ideas, a government-imposed ban on full-face covering would have unintended consequences and likely result in government overreach,” he told Reason in January.

On foreign policy, Johnson lacks the punch most Libertarians crave. Johnson On UN membership, Johnson said the U.S. should “maintain a presence at the United Nations,” but advocates for a reduced role.

“Libertarians do not approve of the U.N. — they fear the U.N.,” said Thornton of the remark.

Still, for those hoping Libertarian value have a chance in Washington, D.C., “Gary Johnson is obviously the most libertarian candidate in the 2016 presidential race, by a country mile,” states Boaz.

“He’s not running as a full-fledged libertarian ideologue, he’s running as the sane choice in an insane election, with a program that is fiscally conservative, socially liberal, and skeptical of endless military interventions overseas.”