



Interview with Gary Johnson, Libertarian Presidential Candidate

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VICTOR BLACKWELL, CNN: Joining me now, the frontrunner for the Libertarian nomination, Gary Johnson, who is also former governor of New Mexico. Governor, good morning.

GARY JOHNSON, LIBERTARIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE: Victor, great to be with you. Thank you for having me on here this morning.

BLACKWELL: Certainly. So you picked as your running mate, Bill Weld, former Massachusetts governor, has been off the radar as it relates to politics for some time. Why Bill Weld?

JOHNSON: Well, first of all, to say that I picked Bill Weld, I think that's misleading. Look, number one on my list, hit out of the park, is Bill Weld. The fact that he wants to do this for me, it's just unbelievable. This was beyond my wildest dreams that Bill Weld would want to do this.

With that said, I do really think that it is formidable, the notion of two governors that served two terms in heavily blue states that both were fiscally conservative, socially liberal I just think speaks volumes.

BLACKWELL: Let me ask you. You said to say that you picked Bill Weld would be misleading. Did he approach you and ask to join this ticket?

JOHNSON: No, I approached him but, like I say, he was way above the list that we had. He enthusiastically wanted to be a part of this. But, like I said, to say I picked him I think just -- he's unto himself. I put Bill Weld on a pedestal. I think that as governor of New Mexico when I showed up to these National Governor Association meetings that Bill Weld was the smartest guy in the room, and from a good standpoint, you know, a humility, not arrogance, but really, really smart and was an outstanding governor, got an A from the Cato Institute.

BLACKWELL: He's certainly making news now. Let me ask you about something he said to the "New York Times" this week in discussion of Donald Trump's proposal to deport 11 million illegal immigrants. He said this reminds him of Kristallnacht back in 1938, the hundreds of synagogues and homes and businesses that were burned in Germany. He said this, "I can hear the glass crunching on Kristallnacht in the ghettos of Warsaw and Vienna when I hear that, honest." Holocaust references and reference to Hitler are typically in politics seen as beyond the pale. But I'll ask you, do you agree with Governor Weld?

JOHNSON: Well, look, deporting 11 million immigrants is just crazy. And I am speaking as a border governor. It has to do with misinformation. We should embrace immigration. It's a good thing. We should make it as easy as possible for somebody that wants to come into this country and work to be able to get a work visa. I'm not talking about a green card or citizenship, but a work visa. It should entail a background check, Social Security so that taxes get paid.

BLACKWELL: Let me jump in here again, because there are many people who agree with you but who would say a reference to that night of all nights and to the holocaust is beyond the pale. Do you agree with Governor Weld or do you regret his having made that comment?

JOHNSON: Look, I take real offense as a border governor myself, I take a real offense at someone that says they want to deport 11 million illegal immigrants, because it affects thousands of families in New Mexico that decades ago came over here as undocumented workers. It wasn't this notion of being illegal. It was undocumented, and he is going to take and deport individuals in New Mexico that are community leaders who have had children, who have had children? There is misinformation about this and it is absolutely off the charts when it comes to the reality of these undocumented workers.

BLACKWELL: Understood. But the last time I'm going to make a turn on this question. Bill Weld made the comment comparing this to Kristallnacht, the night that hundreds of the synagogues and homes and businesses were burned, and that people --

JOHNSON: So what are we going to do?

BLACKWELL: Let me ask you the question, governor.

JOHNSON: What are we going to do? Are we going to go in these homes and take these people out of their homes? Come on. He made that reference. I don't make that reference, but it's crazy. It's off the charts.

BLACKWELL: OK, let's move on. You've now answered the question. Let me move on to the next question.

The possibility of making it on to the main debate stage with the presumptive nominee Donald Trump and the frontrunner, Hillary Clinton or if Bernie Sanders gets the nomination, Senator Sanders, you've got to reach 15 percent there. In the latest FOX News poll, you're at 10. How do you get to 15?

JOHNSON: Well, we just continue to be in the polls. This is going to be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If Mickey Mouse were in the polls right now, he would be polling at 30 percent, but Mickey is not going to be on the ballot in all 50 states. The Libertarian candidate for president is going to be. So just being in the polls will be a self-fulfilling prophecy. And by that, just being in the polls, look, I think my record under the light of day is a good record, my resume, what I've done, that it holds up under scrutiny. Add Bill Weld to that, I think it very formidable.

BLACKWELL: All right, Governor Gary Johnson, we want you to stay with us. We'll take a quick break and I've got a few more questions.

JOHNSON: All right.

BLACKWELL: Thank you.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

BLACKWELL: Back now with former New Mexico governor Gary Johnson who is the frontrunner for the nomination of the Libertarian Party. Governor Johnson, as I said in the previous segment that in the latest FOX News poll that you're at 10 percent double digits already, but as you described on this program yourself and other times and during this interview that you are fiscally conservative and socially liberal. There are some who are part of the never-Trump movement who are not supporting Donald Trump simply because they believe he is not conservative enough. How do you get those voters, can you get those voters who are never-Trump because they don't believe in his conservative bona fides?

JOHNSON: Victor, I've always thought, and have been governor of New Mexico two terms as a Republican, I've always thought that Republicans when it comes to conservative that it had everything to do with smaller government. I'm all about smaller government. I think government tries to do too much and in the process it taxes us too much, and when it taxes us too much, that takes away from my own individual ability to live my life the way I see living my life. So conservative is dollars and cents, living your life, personal freedom. I think most Republicans fall in that category. I think most Americans fall in that category.

BLACKWELL: In the discussion of the pro-life movement, in the discussion of those who believe marriage is to be between one man and one woman, do you believe those views are o of reach for your new running mate Bill Weld?

JOHNSON: Not necessarily. Look, there's nothing wrong with being a social conservative, but if you try and apply those principles to law, what you end up with criminalizing activity that sends people to jail for that activity. I don't think that even though you've got Republicans that are socially conservative, for the most part, I think they really don't care. What they really care about is smaller government, and now I'm back to what I think most Americans really care about. People are fiscally responsible and socially, they're tolerant.

BLACKWELL: All right, Governor Johnson who is the frontrunner for the Libertarian ticket, you've chosen your running mate, former Massachusetts governor Bill Weld, thank you so much for spending some time with us this morning.

JOHNSON: Victor, thank you. And you said it at the top. I'm hoping to get the libertarian nomination. Bill Weld also has to run separately to get the vice presidential nomination. So that happens next weekend. Hopefully we'll move on from there.

BLACKWELL: All right, thank you, governor.

JOHNSON: All right, thanks.