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My view: 'Giving is in my blood and a lifelong habit'

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There has been some controversy as of late over my status as the largest single donor to the campaign of gubernatorial candidate Jonathan Johnson. I wish to address that controversy head-on.

When I was growing up, our family dinner table conversations centered on the U.S. Constitution, Wall Street and the Catholic Church. During those conversations led by my mother and father, the greatness of America and our duty to serve our fellow man were paramount. My parents led by example by, among other things, establishing the Jack and Dorothy Byrne Foundation.

I love this country. I love Utah. I could live anywhere in the world, but I have chosen Utah for the past 16 years. It is my home. I love the people. They are my friends, neighbors and family, and I care about their future.

I am single, childless, and like it that way. What I make in this life I can't take with me. So what I do is donate. It's my heritage and my upbringing. My donations are not given as a quid pro quo, but rather hoping my state, country and world are better than how I found them. That is what my parents taught me.

My political donations have included \$75,000 to former Gov. Jon Huntsman to over \$100,000 to Sen. Orrin Hatch and his various PACs. I have donated over \$1 million to the Cato Institute, contributed to Mia Love, Carly Fiorina, Chris Christie and Rand Paul. This isn't to brag, but to simply say giving is in my blood and a lifelong habit.

So why have I been so generous financially with gubernatorial candidate Jonathan Johnson?

As CEO and founder of Overstock.com, I've worked shoulder-to-shoulder with Jonathan for 14 years. I'm supporting him because he is the kind of principled leader we need more of in this state.

Jonathan and I disagree on numerous issues of significant importance to me. He has made it very clear to me and I to him that there is no quid pro quo for my donations, which is fine with me. I still know he'll be a fantastic leader for Utah.

The question for Utah voters: Can Gary Herbert say that about the lobbyists he summoned in to the Alta Club, when he dubbed himself "Available Jones" to those who substantially donate to his campaign?

Jonathan is a man of principle who will do the right thing even in the face of ridicule. The decade-long fight against a Wall Street scheme called "naked short selling" is an example: at first Overstock, he and I were ridiculed. Then we closed the loopholes for manipulation. Then

Overstock was paid by the manipulators. He'll do the same for Utah as he stands up to federal overreach.

I donate to Jonathan because he is a doer and a problem solver. He hadn't been at Overstock for two months when he was volunteering for projects beyond his scope of responsibility. He'll tackle and solve hard problems for Utah.

I donate to Jonathan because he is a learner and team builder. A lawyer by training, as he transitioned into a business leadership role at Overstock he was quick to learn about the business. He attracted key talent to the Overstock executive team. He'll do the same for Utah.

I donate to Jonathan because incumbents can close off money for opponents; especially primary opponents. Many folks don't want to have the governor's door shut to them. That is why I step up.

I am proud to support my friend and colleague. Utah will be well served under his leadership and backbone.