



## Libertarians Pick Up Steam; Reports of David Koch Pledging Millions

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The Libertarian ticket is picking up steam, with Gary Johnson announcing a fellow former governor, Bill Weld, as his running mate and a source within the Johnson campaign claiming that billionaire David Koch has pledged a "tens of millions of dollars" to push the former New Mexico governor's campaign forward.

Johnson and Weld, former Massachusetts governor, both served in office as Republicans, reports The Washington Post, and their ticket, announced on Wednesday, brings two governors into a race in which 10 sitting or former governors have already been rejected by both Democrats and Republicans.

Johnson is yet well known nationally, but he's no stranger to the presidential tickets. He topped the Libertarian ticket in 2012, when he earned one percent of the vote to come in at a distant third place behind Mitt Romney.

However, with the outcry against Hillary Clinton and especially by anti-Trump forces on the Republican side, Johnson's campaign is gaining some steam, and an unnamed source claimed to The Daily Caller on Thursday that Koch had made the multi-million dollar promise, a statement that neither Koch or the Johnson campaign has confirmed.

The source said that Koch's millions will be made available if Johnson secures the Libertarian Party's nomination at its national convention later this month.

A source close to Koch did not deny the agreement, The Daily Caller reports, but also did not comment. Meanwhile, Ron Nielson, Johnson's campaign manager, said the party would not confirm donor commitments before the convention, and wanted the website to reveal its unnamed source.

Koch and his brother Charles have donated millions to Republican campaigns over the years, but David Koch was the Libertarian Party's vice-presidential candidate in 1980, and sits on the board of the Cato Institute, a nationally prominent Libertarian think tank.

Earlier this month, the Koch brothers stunned many in the Republican Party by warning they "could sit out the presidential campaign entirely — or even back Hillary Clinton."

The Koch brothers' discontent with Trump's aggressive campaign style first emerged in April when Charles Koch told ABC News it was "possible" Clinton, the Democratic presidential front-runner, would make a better president than Trump.

And while people such as Weekly Standard editor Bill Kristol has been pushing for a third-party candidate to go up against Trump and Clinton, such a candidate will have missed deadlines to get on the ballot in several states, reports The Post. However, the Libertarian Party is already set to be on the ballot in all 50 states, and Johnson and Weld are not expected to have any challengers for the party's nomination.

Even though the Johnson ticket isn't expected to win a majority of votes, it could keep Trump or Clinton from getting a majority of electoral votes, meaning the election would go to the House of Representatives to make a final decision.

However, on Wednesday, Fox News released a poll saying that Johnson would earn 10 percent of the vote in a three-way race against Trump and Clinton this fall, with Johnson pulling about 8 percent of votes from both Democrats and Republicans.

Weld also has connections with casino magnate Steve Wynn, serving as his attorney and chief lobbyist while he was trying to secure a state license for a resort and casino in Boston. The Johnson source said that "Wynn is likely to be a very important supporter" should Weld be Johnson's running mate.

However, that may not happen, as the Libertarian Party picks its presidential and vice presidential candidates separately, and it is not clear that Wynn would be involved without Weld. Wynn's spokesman did not comment on the unnamed source's claims.