



Will David Koch Donate Millions to Libertarian Presidential Candidate Gary Johnson?

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Billionaire businessman David Koch has pledged tens of millions of dollars to the general election campaign of Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson, according to an exclusive report in the Daily Caller.

Koch ran for vice president on the Libertarian ticket in 1980 and sits on the board of the libertarian think tank the Cato Institute.

No one in the Koch camp or the Johnson campaign would confirm the story. Johnson has strongly denied the alliance while a spokesman for David Koch has also said the story isn't true.

But there may be good reasons for Koch and Johnson to keep mum until after the nomination, not the least of which would be the unknown effect on Libertarian convention delegates if such an alliance were made public, and the embarrassment of Koch if Johnson fails to secure the top spot.

The revelation that Koch has pledged significant financial support to the Johnson campaign came just hours after Johnson announced a running mate who may assist in securing additional funding from another billionaire.

On Wednesday, in a story first reported by The Daily Caller, Johnson chose former Massachusetts Governor Bill Weld as his running mate.

In addition to his credentials as a twice-elected libertarian-leaning Republican governor, Weld recently served as attorney and chief lobbyist for casino mogul Steve Wynn during a fight to secure a state license to develop a resort and casino in suburban Boston.

The source within Johnson's campaign admitted that "Wynn is likely to be a very important supporter" of the campaign as a result of the Las Vegas casino owner's relationship with Weld.

The Libertarian Party selects its presidential and vice presidential nominees separately, so it is possible that Johnson may be stuck with a running mate other than Weld. It is unclear whether Wynn would be as likely to support Johnson if Weld were not part of the ticket.

A message to Steve Wynn's spokesman was not returned.

The potential infusion of money into the Libertarian Party presidential ticket could help Johnson reach mainstream voters this year.

"People are upset and are looking for an alternative to the broken two party system," said Nevada Libertarian Party Chairman Brett H. Pojunis.

"If the Libertarian candidate is successful raising money, the media will have a hard time ignoring that candidate," according to Pojunis. "Especially with a public hungry for an alternative to two of the most polarizing figures in American political history."

How big a difference would the support of David Koch make? Johnson, who ran as the Libertarian Party candidate in 2012, raised and spent \$2.5 million during that election cycle. If two whales like Koch and Wynn open their wallets, it could make Johnson competitive enough nationally to appear on stage during the presidential debates.

Johnson received less than 1% of the vote in 2012 with a Libertarian record of 1.2 million votes cast. Given the strong feelings by voters against both major party candidates, that number is very likely to rise significantly in 2016.