



Johnson Campaign Forms Libertarian Advisory Board

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Following the July 17th meeting of the Libertarian National Committee in Las Vegas, the Gary Johnson for President campaign is forming an advisory board consisting of “a small group of high profile Libertarians,” according to Johnson staffer Steve Kerbel.

During a Q&A session with Johnson campaign manager Ron Nielson at last weekend’s LNC meeting, Region 1 LNC Representative (and fellow IPR editor) Caryn Ann Harlos and I both expressed concern over the campaign’s messaging and the need to ensure that Gary Johnson is hearing from libertarian advisors.

There have been concerns voiced by members of the radical wing of the Libertarian Party and the larger libertarian movement on IndependentPoliticalReport.com and elsewhere about some of the positions taken by Johnson and Weld, the extent to which the word “libertarian” is used in the campaign’s advertising, and statements made by the candidates.

At the meeting, campaign manager Nielson appeared sensitive to those concerns and willing to address them frankly. On the topic of advisors, he said that the campaign has already been getting advice from the Cato Institute among others and that the libertarian think tank has been of great assistance, but expressed openness to the idea of tapping some Libertarians to serve in a formal advisory capacity.

Two days later I was contacted by Kerbel, himself a former candidate for the Libertarian Party’s presidential nomination who dropped out of the race prior to the convention to endorse Johnson, and invited to serve as a member of an advisory board that he said he is “assembling for the purpose of providing feedback to the campaign.” In response to my email query, he confirmed that this is being done “as a result of discussions at the LNC meeting”, and named five other individuals whom he said will also be serving on the advisory board, all current or former members of the Libertarian National Committee: Harlos, LP Vice Chair Arvin Vohra, LNC Region 1 Alternate Aaron Starr, LNC Region 7 Alternate Danny Bedwell, and former LNC At-Large Representative Doug Craig.

“We may add a couple more, but we are close to complete,” Kerbel said. “We have some great people involved and if we can all work well together, this will be a benefit for the party and for the campaign.”