

# the Stranger

## In Seattle Visit, Libertarian Gary Johnson Outlines His Vision: "It's Gonna be Uber Everything"

Heidi Groover

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### Original:

He's a gun-nut, an anti-vaxxer/anti-taxxer, a foreign policy genius, and the guy Washington Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Bryant said he'd consider after finally disavowing Donald Trump.

Like Green Party candidate Jill Stein, Libertarian Gary Johnson won't be allowed in the first presidential debate this year. He's polling at just 8 percent nationally, but in a recent Washington Post poll had 16 percent support in Washington State. (According to Koch's lackeys at CATO Institute, Washington has the 8th highest population of Libertarians in the country, a group made largely of white men.)

Even spookier is that Johnson isn't just pulling voters from Trump. Politico reports on polls showing he's pulling from both camps.

He'll be at the Sheraton this afternoon for a rally to ruin everything for the rest of us. I'll be there. Follow here for updates.

### Update:

Johnson's first words when he took the stage in a ballroom at the downtown Seattle Sheraton were, "I'm sorry about that Aleppo gaffe."

It was one of several times the no-chance Libertarian candidate brought up his embarrassing response to a reporter's question about the Syrian city. "There will be another Aleppo day," Johnson told a fawning crowd of a few hundred. "It's how we deal with failure that ultimately determines success."

It was an almost endearing, humble tone echoed in Johnson's promises to work across the aisle—and then immediately ruined by his calls to allow an unfettered free market, shutter federal departments, and replace health insurance with "pay as you go" healthcare.

"The model of the future is the sharing economy," Johnson said. "It's Uber. It's Airbnb. I think it's gonna be Uber everything."

"Uber everything" is, of course, the perfect Libertarian wet dream, especially when you ignore the racist, anti-worker realities of the sharing economy, not to mention self-driving cars.

In his speech, Johnson outlined the socially liberal, sometimes confusing version of Libertarianism that may be helping him peel away supporters from both major parties but has also earned him criticism from hard core right-wingers and Libertarians. Johnson said he's supportive of LGBTQ rights, cannabis legalization, a women's right to choose (though he's personally anti-abortion), and liberal immigration policies (though he's vague on this point, supporting vetted entry for any immigrants who "want to work.") He called Congressional term limits "a silver bullet" and simultaneously proclaimed "All Lives Matter" and "Black Lives Matter."

Supporters, including a couple of low-budget celebrity backers, cast Johnson as a reasonable alternative to two unpopular mainstream candidates.

But they also rallied behind Johnson's small-government, laissez faire economic vision. The candidate, who supports reductions in corporate taxes, called for a "free market approach to healthcare" that would offer insurance only for "catastrophic" incidents and a "competitive," "pay-as-you-go" system for everything else.

He proposes eliminating the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Homeland Security ("What is that about?"), Department of Education, and Department of Commerce.

"What should the federal government do when it comes to education?" Johnson said. "Nothing!" the crowd shouted.

Nathan Woodruff, a Johnson supporter and University of Washington student who wore a "Don't Tread on Anyone" t-shirt, said he excitedly joined the Libertarian Party eight months ago because he identifies as "fiscally conservative and socially liberal... I think that's a pretty good mix of what drives American politics today." But Woodruff also said the government should impose no restrictions on gun ownership because gun violence is the result of "social problems, not the weapon." (That position is out of step with polling showing most Americans support stricter background checks and an assault weapons ban.)

Tiffany Diaz De Leon and Robert Parker, both members of the Kitsap County Libertarian Party, said they're drawn to Johnson's non-interventionist foreign policy platform. Both said they see Johnson as a moderate between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, but both said they'd vote for Trump if not Johnson.

Washington is an interesting site for Johnson's anti-tax message, a place with massively wealthy corporations getting tax breaks and, simultaneously, serious public funding needs like basic K-12 education and homelessness services. But Johnson and his supporters are free market true believers, public services be damned.

"You can't tax your way out of this problem," Parker said when I asked him about the need for public money for homelessness and other problems. "If you took every dime from... the 1 percent, you can't solve this financial problem... Cut regulations. Just get out of the way and let the brilliant people like Bill Gates and Paul Allen, let them build."