



Monday, 20 August 2012 | Thomas R. Eddlem

The “Other” Candidates for President

Are you unhappy with the choice between big-spending incumbent Barack Obama and the Republican Mitt Romney, who refuses to outline any significant spending cuts over Obama’s agenda? Take heart! In November, you’ll likely have one or more alternatives on the ballot for president who provide real differences from the two major-party candidates. In fact, third-party candidates not only provide a choice instead of an echo for those who see the race between Obama and Romney as picking the lesser of two evils, these third-party candidates could help shape the debate and even tilt the election. But even if they don’t, they at least offer an alternative for those who cannot in conscience vote for either Romney or Obama. It’s a factor that both the Romney and Obama camps are reportedly watching closely.

Time magazine speculated August 1 that Constitution Party nominee Virgil Goode could “cost Mitt Romney the presidency.” Reporter Elizabeth Dias wrote that “Goode is pulling fully 9% of Virginia’s vote, according to a mid-July Public Policy Polling survey, leaving Obama ahead of Romney 49% to 35%. In a tight election where Virginia’s 13 electoral college votes could make or break Romney’s candidacy, even 2% for Goode could pull enough Republicans away to hand the historically red state to Obama in November.” Likewise, Green Party nominee Jill Stein could slice off tens of thousands of key Obama votes.

But regardless of who actually wins the election, the constitutional powers of the presidency will continue to be less important than those of Congress, which possesses all legislative powers. As important as it may be to elect a good (constitutionally minded) president, electing a good Congress is far more important.

To better inform our readers, below we profile three third-party presidential candidates likely to make the ballot in a majority of states. They are profiled on four key issue areas: fiscal agenda, foreign policy, civil liberties, and social issues.

Libertarian Party:

Former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson (Running mate: former California Judge Jim Gray)

Gary Johnson (pictured) served as New Mexico governor from 1995-2003 as a Republican and promises a different path from Romney and Obama under the campaign slogan “live free.” In a campaign ad, the former Republican presidential candidate says: “Give me one term as your president, and I will give you four years

of peace, four years of fiscally conservative, socially accepting leadership.”

While the Johnson campaign has not posted a progress report on ballot access, the Libertarian Party typically makes the ballot in 45-50 states. So nearly every American will be able to check off Johnson in the ballot booth.

Fiscal Agenda: As governor, Johnson was labeled by the conservative Club for Growth “one of the most anti-spending governors in New Mexico history.”

Nevertheless, the libertarian-leaning Cato Institute only graded Johnson’s governorship as “B” throughout his tenure, largely because he was unable to entirely overcome an overwhelmingly Democratic state legislature. It wasn’t for lack of trying, however. Johnson became known as “Governor No” for his 750 vetoes in his two terms as governor, vetoing more than a third of the bills crossing his desk and using the line-item veto heavily on many of the rest of them. “Johnson sports a libertarian attitude toward government,” the Cato Institute said of Johnson’s governorship back in 2002. “He favors school vouchers, term limits, privately run prisons, lean budgets, and deep tax cuts.”

Johnson pledges to send a balanced budget proposal to Congress for fiscal 2014, the first budget of his presidency. He would do this by spending cuts, seeking entitlement reform, and an end to “excessive spending, bloated stimulus programs, unnecessary farm subsidies, and earmarks.” Johnson would work toward abolition of the U.S. Department of Education, arguing that it actually inhibits funding for education: “The Department of Education grants each state 11 cents out of every dollar it spends on education. Unfortunately, every dollar of this money comes with 16 cents of strings attached. States that accept federal funding lose five cents for every dollar spent on education to pay for federal mandates and regulations, taking millions of dollars out of the classroom.”

Johnson also favors a thorough audit of the Federal Reserve Bank.

Foreign Policy: On foreign policy, Johnson would cut military spending by withdrawing U.S. troops from Afghanistan and Europe. He does not regard Iran as an imminent threat to the United States, and would not engage in sanctions against the Persian nation. He supports free trade as a foreign policy, and is generally supportive of NAFTA and the WTO, regarding them as successful implementation of his pro-free-trade agenda.

Civil Liberties: Johnson’s positions on civil liberties (what traditionally have been called God-given “inalienable rights”) are the strongest of any candidate expected to be on most ballots in November. Johnson wouldn’t have signed the NDAA (which allows presidents to indefinitely detain American citizens), is against the Patriot Act and warrantless surveillance, is against torture, and is for what he calls “due process” for terror suspects. He remains open to special military tribunals (instead of regular trial by jury) for certain terrorist suspects, however. Johnson is a solid supporter of the Second Amendment’s individual right to keep and bear arms.

Of the 2010 *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision, which allows citizens to associate into corporations and spend money to persuade voters without federal government permission, Johnson takes a strong First Amendment stand. "I think it comes under the First Amendment, that they should be able to contribute as much money as they want." Johnson makes the argument that more political speech by those outside of the half-dozen corporations that control most of the mainstream media "makes politicians more accountable, not less accountable."

Social Issues: Johnson is generally pro-abortion, saying to a May 5, 2011 GOP debate audience in South Carolina, "I support a woman's right to choose up until viability of the fetus, as governor of New Mexico, I would have signed a bill banning late term abortion." Johnson opposes government funding of abortions.

On immigration, Johnson says that the federal government should make legal immigration easier and "should focus on making it easier and simpler for willing workers to come here with a temporary work visa, pay taxes, contribute to society, and fill jobs as the market demands." Johnson also supports "workable employer verification systems" for illegal immigrants, a position that is not in sync with the traditional Libertarian Party open-border philosophy.

Johnson favors so-called "same-sex marriage" recognition, but has indicated that he ultimately favors taking marriage out of the hands of government. He has called for the immediate legalization of marijuana and an end to the drug war.

Constitution Party:

Former Virginia Congressman Virgil Goode (Running mate: attorney Jim Clymer)

Labeled "Mr. Independent" by his home newspaper in Virginia, the *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, former six-term Virginia Congressman Virgil Goode has demonstrated a willingness to change parties when his principles did not comport with his party. Goode was elected to the Virginia state Senate as a Democrat, and served his first two congressional terms as a Democrat. But he became a political independent in the year 2000, and was reelected twice as an independent before switching to the Republican Party. Goode may have a major impact on the November race, as the former Virginia congressman is currently polling between five and nine percent in Virginia. Virginia is a key swing state in the presidential race, and support for Goode could tilt the outcome of the state in the race more than any other third-party candidate.

Goode left Congress after narrowly losing a reelection bid in the 2008 Democratic landslide for Obama. In his last term in Congress (2007-2008), this magazine's "Freedom Index" congressional scorecard rated him at 72 percent. Now running for president, he has already qualified for the ballot in at least 17 states in November (but will probably qualify for twice that number).

Fiscal Agenda: As a congressman, Goode reliably voted to cut foreign aid and other wasteful spending. He even voted against his own party's appropriations bills on some occasions.

Goode promises to introduce a balanced budget immediately by cutting spending. “Nearly every department and agency will face significant cuts and some will face elimination,” Goode says on his campaign website. Goode plans to eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts and No Child Left Behind, and to cut the Department of Education and foreign aid. He would pursue a full audit of the Federal Reserve Bank.

Foreign Policy: Goode favors a strong military that is substantially disengaged from unnecessary foreign wars, which is a change from his earlier vote in favor of the Iraq War (roll call 455, 2002). He now says, “I do not believe we should be involved in wars that have not been declared by Congress as specifically provided in the U.S. Constitution, so we must come home from Afghanistan. And I don’t think we can afford — nor is it strategically necessary — to have military bases all over the world. We owe too much money to underwrite the stationing of so many troops all around the world. Finally, I am against placing our armed forces under United Nations command.”

Goode strongly opposes multilateral free-trade agreements as job killers, voting against CAFTA — the Central American Free Trade Agreement — (roll call 443, 2005) and calling for the end of NAFTA and the WTO. In such calls, he could be contrasted with the libertarian-leaning Rep. Ron Paul, who supports genuine free trade but opposes the trade regimes as centralizing forces and threats to national sovereignty rather than as job-killers. Goode makes no claim to support free trade as an objective good.

Civil Liberties: As a congressman, Goode voted to allow warrantless searches (roll call 502, 2006) and for virtual civil immunity for telecommunications firms that provide private subscriber information to intelligence services (roll call 437, 2008). He also voted for military tribunals for terrorist suspects (roll call 491, 2006), tribunals that flatly contradict the Sixth Amendment requirement for a jury trial for all criminal suspects.

Goode says he has learned from his years in the private sector, noting in his acceptance speech at the April 21 Constitution Party national convention that one of the most important votes he made a mistake about was his vote in favor of the Patriot Act (roll call 398, 2001) and its reauthorization (roll call 414, 2005). “I made some mistakes in the House on votes,” Goode said in his acceptance speech, “and one in particular — several but one in particular: I voted for the Patriot Act. And most in this room are very much opposed to that measure. I want to say that my association with the Constitution Party over the last three plus years has given me a better perspective of analyzing legislation from a constitutional viewpoint. And I want to say that I made a mistake in voting for this measure.”

But in his very next words, Goode demonstrated that his improved view of civil liberties had yet to be brought up to the level of actual constitutional understanding. He would only seek to repeal the Patriot Act “as it applies to U.S. citizens in this country and to legal permanent residents. I do not favor, though this may not comport with all federal court decisions, extending constitutional rights to persons from foreign countries or those illegally in the United States.” Of course, the Constitution does not limit rights to U.S. citizens, nor can it. Rights are inalienable gifts from God. Moreover, the Bill of Rights makes no distinctions between citizens and immigrants — legal or illegal. The Sixth Amendment demands that a trial by jury is a right in “all criminal prosecutions.” It allows no exceptions.

Goode is, however, a solid supporter of the Second Amendment (A+ rating from Gun Owners of America). And Goode says he favors repealing provisions of the NDAA that allow the president to indefinitely detain U.S. citizens without trial.

Social Issues: On social issues, Goode has a solid conservative record. He is pro-life on abortion and supports traditional marriage. "I've always supported the proposition that marriage should be between one man and one woman," he said in his April 21 acceptance speech for the Constitution Party presidential nomination.

Goode's social focus is on immigration, making his campaign slogan "citizenship matters" a strong contrast to the establishment candidates Obama and Romney, as well as Libertarian Party candidate Gary Johnson.

Goode has called for a repeal of that portion of the 14th Amendment that courts have interpreted to mean that children of illegal immigrants born in the United States are entitled to automatic U.S. citizenship. Goode has called for a moratorium on even legal immigration (with few exceptions) until the immigration issue can be solved, a contrast with all the other candidates for president.

Rep. Goode has a strong record against marijuana legalization, contrasting with the Libertarian Johnson and Green Party candidate Stein.

Green Party:

Dr. Jill Stein (Running mate: community organizer Cheri Honkala)

The Green Party presidential nominee, Jill Stein, is a medical doctor by trade, graduating from Harvard College and Harvard Medical School, and has sought numerous Massachusetts state political offices over the past decade.

The Green Party has already gained ballot access in at least 23 states and the District of Columbia, and as a registered write-in in at least four additional states. Stein will probably be on the ballot in 30 or more states and a qualified write-in virtually everywhere else.

Fiscal Agenda: The Green Party platform promises that "Greens will reduce our national debt." The party promises to raise taxes to as high as 90 percent in some areas and enact a 50-percent cut in defense spending. It also promises to "end corporate welfare." By themselves, these changes would close the deficit gap, *assuming* the additional taxes don't destroy the economic activities being taxed, but Stein has also promised a massive new wave of spending under the slogan "The Green New Deal for America" that would far outpace any spending cuts and tax increases. Thus, it's not surprising that Stein's campaign website doesn't supply a spreadsheet of how it would budget funds.

Stein's January 2012 "Green New Deal for America" manifesto is based upon Franklin Delano Roosevelt's 1944 "Second Bill of Rights." Stein explains: "The Green New Deal begins with an Economic Bill of Rights

that recognizes our rights to an economy that serves people. This means that everyone willing and able to work has the right to a job at a living wage. All of us have the right to quality education, health care, utilities, and housing.” The Green Bill of Rights constitutes a giant economic make-work agenda guaranteed to bankrupt the nation and put 16 million more people on the government payroll. (Stein would implement it at the state and local levels.)

The Stein/Green Party economic philosophy can strictly be categorized as *fascist*, in that the Green Party would redirect corporations to support the goals of the government, and the government would support the new corporate structure with tax dollars. The Green Party platform calls for “federal chartering of corporations that includes comprehensive, strict and enforceable social responsibility requirements.” The new corporate model under a Green regime would be the cooperative: “The Green Transition Program will provide grants and low-interest loans to grow green businesses and cooperatives, with an emphasis on small, locally-based companies that keep the wealth created by local labor circulating in the community rather than being drained off to enrich absentee investors.” Stein proposes creating “a Corporation for Economic Democracy” to teach Americans the wonders of cooperatives.

Stein would nationalize all utilities and enact far-reaching environmental regulations (increasing Corporate Average Fuel Economy rules for auto manufacturers and a “zero waste” policy). The Green Party additionally proposes a government-run “highly centralized food system” where government sets food prices according to “the health effects of eating processed foods.”

The Green Party would nationalize the Federal Reserve Bank, and it calls for “ending what’s known as the fractional reserve system.” Greens would partially pay for their new spending with government monetary inflation that “will be created and spent into circulation by the U.S. Government.”

Foreign Policy: Some of Stein’s foreign policies would attract constitutional conservatives: Stein notes that “Washington and Eisenhower, both generals who became president, warned us about the military industrial complex. They warned us about the dangers of empire. The Green New Deal includes a 50% reduction in military spending and the withdrawal of U.S. military bases from the over 140 countries in which our military is now located. It calls for restoration of the National Guard as the centerpiece of our system of national defense.” Informed constitutionalists recognize that huge cuts in military spending can be made without endangering national defense since much of the military budget is based on empire building and foreign adventurism, not national defense. Moreover, even a 50-percent cut in military spending would leave U.S. “defense” spending three times greater than China’s, the world’s next largest spender on the military.

However, the Green Party platform would *undermine* U.S. security and sovereignty if its plans were implemented. It calls for dismantling all U.S. nuclear weapons unilaterally, plus international controls: “The U.S. ... must allow foreign teams to visit the U.S. for verification purposes at least annually.” The Green Party platform argues that “the U.S. is obligated to render military assistance or service under U.N. command to enforce U.N. Security Council resolutions.” The Greens would seek to give up the U.S. veto at the Security Council of the United Nations and “urge our government to sign the International Criminal Court agreement and respect the authority of that institution.” Put simply, the Green Party supports global

governance under the United Nations.

The Green Party seeks to repeal international trade regimes such as NAFTA and the WTO, but would replace them with revised agreements that “protect the labor, human rights, economy, environment and domestic industry of partner and recipient nations,” — that is, a more encompassing and powerful NAFTA and WTO.

Civil Liberties: The Green Party platform officially calls for “strict enforcement of our First Amendment rights of speech, assembly, association and petition,” but in reality would end each of those freedoms. The Green Party would enact federal censorship by creating laws to “carve up the big media conglomerates, and follow up with vigorous anti-trust enforcement,” “reinstate and strengthen the Fairness Doctrine,” “ensure net neutrality,” and “establish substantial public interest obligations for broadcasters and hold them accountable, and revoke licenses from outlets that fail to satisfy these obligations.”

The Green Party would seek a constitutional amendment to repeal the Supreme Court’s *Citizens United* decision, which freed American citizens to associate, incorporate, and engage in political speech outside of the six media conglomerates that control 95 percent of mainstream media. The Green Party says, “We urgently need to amend our Constitution to make clear that corporations are not persons and money is not speech,” though corporations are nothing more than assemblies of citizens exercising their First Amendment rights together. The Green Party’s solution is to have government become the gate-keeper of all political opinion: “Replace big money control of elections with full public financing and free and equal access to the airwaves.”

The Green Party is generally supportive of gun control — even for police — as the party’s 2008 platform called for limiting police possession of guns and even non-lethal weapons such as Tasers, tear gas, and pepper spray. “We’re not arguing that nobody should have a gun — but public safety should factor into constraints,” Stein told OnTheIssues.org website December 21, 2011.

While the Green Party is hostile to the First and Second Amendments of the U.S. Constitution, the party platform is strong on the rest of the Bill of Rights, calling to:

- “End illegal government spying, including the use of warrantless wiretaps;”
- “End torture;”
- “Restore habeas corpus;”
- “End the use of indefinite detention without trial;” and,
- “Repeal ... the USA PATRIOT Act.”

Social Issues: The Green Party is socially liberal, favoring federally funded, legalized abortion. The Green Party also favors government recognition of “same-sex marriage” and applauds the abolition of the “don’t ask, don’t tell” rules for the military.

On immigration, the Green Party favors amnesty for illegal aliens and open borders with Canada and Mexico, allowing anyone from either country to move to the United States. The Green Party would repeal the Real ID law, noting that “a national ID card system is one of the hallmarks of a totalitarian government or police state.”

Greens seek to “end the failed war on drugs,” grant amnesty for all non-violent drug offenders, and “implement a step-by-step program to decriminalize all drugs in the United States.”

* * *

These three candidates are the only three likely to achieve ballot status in a majority of states, but they won’t be the only candidates on the ballot in every state. The fractious Reform Party (of Ross Perot legacy) may field a candidate. Several candidates are vying for that party’s nomination. And the Peace and Freedom Party may end up nominating comedienne/actress Roseanne Barr for president and anti-war activist Cindy Sheehan for vice president. Both parties could obtain ballot positions in some states.

The other wildcard in the presidential election is a candidate who isn’t even running: Texas Congressman Ron Paul, who won possibly as many as 100,000 votes in the 2008 general election (the official tally was 42,426, though most states don’t report unregistered write-ins to the Federal Election Commission). With the unfolding of the Ron Paul “revolution” over the past two years, Paul will likely receive more write-in votes than four years ago.