

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH GARY JOHNSON AND WILLIAM WELD

SUBJECT: THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY PRESIDENTIAL TICKET – FORMER NEW MEXICO GOV. GARY JOHNSON AND FORMER MASSACHUSETTS GOV. WILLIAM WELD – WILL OUTLINE WHY THEY THINK A THIRD-PARTY EFFORT MAY BE MORE LIKELY TO SUCCEED THIS YEAR THAN IN PAST ELECTIONS

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LOCATION: THE PRESS CLUB BALLROOM, WASHINGTON, D.C.

TIME: 12:30 P.M. EDT

DATE: THURSDAY, JULY 7, 2016

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THOMAS BURR: (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Thomas Burr; I'm the Washington correspondent for the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the 109th President of the National Press Club. Our guests today are New Mexico Governor, former New Mexico Governor, Gary Johnson, and former Massachusetts Governor William Weld, the Libertarian's presidential and vice presidential nominees. I would like to welcome our Public Radio and C-SPAN audiences and I want to remind you that you can follow the action on Twitter using the hashtag NPCLive. That's NPCLive.

Now it's time to introduce our head table guests. I would ask that each of you stand briefly as your name is announced. Please hold your applause until I've finished introducing the entire table. From your right, Wes Pippert, associate professor emeritus and Washington program director emeritus of the University of Missouri's School of Journalism; Ed Barks, President of Barks Communications and a Press Club board member; Tracie Mauriello, Washington bureau chief of the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*; Keith Laing, Washington correspondent for *The Detroit News*; Sally Quinn, a journalist and author.

Skipping over one of our speakers for now, Kasia Klimasinska, Bloomberg News breaking news reporter and the chair of the Press Club Speaker's Committee. Skipping over our other speaker for now, Mark Schoeff, Jr., a senior reporter of InvestmentNews

and the organizer of today's luncheon. Thank you, Mark. Leslie Marshall, a journalist and author and the wife of Governor Weld; Bryant Harris, Washington correspondent for the Yomiuri Shimbun; Brian Sansoni, vice president of communications for the American Cleaning Institute; and Michael Coleman, the Washington bureau chief of the *Albuquerque Journal*. Thank you all. (Applause)

This year's election has been described as one in which voters will hold their noses while they make their choices. Both presumptive nominees, Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump had disapproval ratings above 50 percent. If there ever were a moment for a third party to break through, it seems now is the time, but will it happen?

Today's guests, Libertarian presidential ticket will have something to say about that. We're pleased to welcome to the National Press Club former New Mexico Governor Gary Johnson, the presidential nominee, and his running mate, William Weld, the former Governor of Massachusetts. They both served their states as Republicans, but now they want to lead their country as Libertarians. This is the second time Johnson has headed the Libertarian Party ticket. He ran in 2012, taking 1.3 million votes, or nearly 1 percent of those cast, the most ever for Libertarian candidates.

Recent polls show him doing better this year. The Real Clear Politics average shows in a four-way race of Clinton, Trump, Johnson and Green Party nominee Jill Stein, Johnson takes seven percent of the vote. But in order to appear in the televised presidential debates, Johnson will have to do even better than that and hit at least 15 percent in five national polls, a requirement set by the Commission on Presidential Debates.

In a recent appearance before the U. S. Conference of Mayors, Johnson called himself a fiscal conservative and social liberal. He also said that the Libertarians take the best ideas of the Republican and Democratic Parties. As New Mexico's Governor from 1995 to 2003, he boasted of cutting taxes 14 times while balancing the budget.

His running mate is another former governor of a blue state, William Weld, who was Massachusetts' chief executive from 1991 to 1997. He own office with 51 percent of the vote and was reelected with 71 percent. In a speech at the 1992 Republican Convention, Weld turned the phrase that resonates with Libertarians. "I want to get government out of your wallets and out of your bedroom."

Johnson has climbed Mt. Everest. What he and Governor Weld are attempting to do this year, defeat the major parties, is just as daunting. Under today's format, each of our guest will speak for about ten minutes, then we'll move to questions. Please give a warm National Press Club welcome to Governors Gary Johnson and William Weld. (Applause)

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: This is about the most crazy election that any of us have ever seen. And you know how crazy it is? I might be the next President of the

United States. (Laughter) I am Gary Johnson and I am the former Governor of New Mexico, two terms. Elected as a Republican in a state that 2:1 Democrats. I think it was very significant. With me is Bill Weld, former two-term Governor of Massachusetts. Republican, elected twice in a state that I think approaches 4:1 Democrat. And reelected the second time by the largest margin in the history of Massachusetts politics running for governor.

We are the Libertarian nominees for president and vice president. We're on the ballot in all 50 states. That is something that no other third party will be able to lay claim to. (Applause) Bill and I are classical liberals; fiscally conservative, socially liberal. We also happen to think that these military interventions result in the unintended consequence of making the world less safe, not more safe. So I think we're skeptical.

I think most of you fall in that same category of being classical liberals. I think most of America falls in the category of being classical liberal. Sadly, Republicans don't fall in this category. And part of that has to do right now with the Republican nominee for president. They're not socially tolerant at all. They're not welcoming to gays, to lesbians, to women, to ethnic minorities, and I will say as a border state governor, the things that he is saying regarding immigration are absolutely incendiary. The fact that he is going to deport 11 million undocumented workers, that he wants to build a fence across the border, that they are murders and rapists when in fact they are law abiding citizens and they are hard working and they are just looking to improve their lives as we all are looking to improve our lives.

And Democrats, I'm afraid, don't either fit in the category of being classical liberal. Everything about the Democratic Party is free, free everything. Government's going to provide you with everything it is that you need, and I think we all recognize that nothing is free. Somebody pays for that, and so at the end of the day government grows with Democrats and taxes go up. And when taxes go up, that's money out of your and my pockets that we could be spending on our own lives that shouldn't we have that money to make choices in our lives as opposed to government determining what's best?

I have been asked, would we be satisfied with getting 15 percent of the vote in the general election. Absolutely not. We would not be doing this if there weren't the opportunity to actually win. But the only opportunity that we have of winning is being in the presidential debates. And to be in the presidential debates, we have to be at 15 percent in the polls and we think that that is very doable. Consensus number right now, you could argue, is at about 10 percent. That's up from half of that just six or seven weeks ago. And we think we'll make our case over the summer. We think we'll get to the 15 percent. We think we'll be in the presidential debates and we think anything can happen at that point.

And I am speaking to the fact that we have the two most polarizing figures in America today. If Mickey Mouse were the third name in any of these polls, Mickey would be polling at 30 because Mickey is a known commodity. But Mickey's not on the ballot in all 50 states. And Bill and I are.

We began campaigning a month ago. We served together as governors of our respective states. We were good friends then, we're good friends now. Beyond my wildest dreams, Bill Weld is my running mate. He was a role model for me prior to becoming governor, and I have always held Bill Weld on a pedestal. The fact that he is my running mate, I think, adds incredible credibility to this run.

We plan on running as a team. We plan on governing as a team. We're not going to have separate staffs which seek to divide in this case the president and the vice president. So this is a two for one, is what I like to say.

In our administration, appointments are not going to be based on politics, whether you're a Democrat, whether you're a Republican. Everyone can apply. Independent; as Governor of New Mexico, I really prided myself on the appointments that I made. I actually interviewed for every single appointment that I did make and that's a plan that we have running for President of the United States. Hire the best people, Republicans, Democrats, unaffiliated.

The Johnson-Weld presidency, no insults, no threats, no bluffs. And that's what you'll see in our campaign, too. I think there's plenty of that to go around without the two of us adding to any of that. No self serving, sanctimonious lectures will come out of the Johnson-Weld administration. (Applause) Our standard for governing will be the health, safety, wellness of American citizens. And the goal to make that happen is to have a robust economy. I did cut spending in New Mexico, and when I say cut, the historical growth rate of government spending in New Mexico I cut in half in my eight years, something that had not been seen before.

But I cut taxes 14 times, Bill Weld cut taxes 21 times. Count on us to support legislation that will simplify and lower taxes. Count on us to provide proposals on how to actually make that happen. Government can provide a level playing field for everyone. Crony capitalism is alive and well. And crony capitalism has everything to do with government getting involved in everyday affairs. Count on us to reduce that role of government when it comes to everyday affairs, but count on us to support legislation that makes things more fair, level playing field.

In 2012, Rick Perry was beating his chest over the fact that he created more jobs in Texas than anyone else running for president. Well, they did an analysis and actually it was Gary Johnson. And asked to respond, which I did as Governor also, government does not create jobs; the private sector does, but government can provide a level playing field. And I think I greatly contributed to that as Governor of New Mexico.

We both understand what Washington doesn't, and that's that money comes from taxpayers, not from the government. Government doesn't create jobs. A consistently lower tax burden and regulatory burden will give business confidence to move forward and that is something that we will provide.

We're not guessing about this. Two former governors running for President of the United States, we were asked the question coming from an editorial board meeting before this, so you're just supposed to take this on faith? No, don't take this on faith. Google Gary Johnson, Google Bill Weld. This is for real. This is for real and this will make a difference. Give us a chance. Give us a chance and we will make a difference.

I'm going to close here with Johnson's seven principles of good government. One is become reality-driven. Find out what's what and base your decisions and actions on that. Number two, always be honest and tell the truth. It's extremely difficult to do any damage to somebody who's willing to tell the truth regardless of the consequences. Number three, always do what's right and fair. Learn to ignore your critics and continue to do what you know to be right.

Number four, determine your goal, develop a plan to reach that goal and then act, don't procrastinate. Number five, make sure everybody who ought to know that you're doing knows what you're doing, communicate. Number six, don't hesitate to deliver bad news. There's always time to fix things. When you tell the truth, you admit mistakes, how often do mistakes compound themselves because people just refuse to acknowledge them? And then lastly, do whatever it takes to get your job done. If you don't have a job that you love, get a job you love now, today. It'll never be easier because it's never better than waking up and enjoying what it is you're doing with your life. Thank you very much. I think I turn it over to Bill Weld. (Applause)

GOVERNOR WELD: Thank you, Governor and good afternoon, everyone. My name is Bill Weld, as Gary has said. I'm a former two-term Governor of Massachusetts and I'm running for Vice President of the United States as the nominee of the Libertarian Party. Before being governor, I worked in this town as a staffer for the U. S. House and for the U. S. Senate. And as an appointee in the U. S. Justice Department under President Reagan. And that was in the days before partisan gridlock gripped the capital. People listened to each other, things got done.

Not today. The two power monopoly of the Republican and Democratic Parties has now run the course of all monopolies, becoming arrogant and calcified. They're like an electric utility with a guaranteed rate of return. Hyper gerrymandering has resulted in extreme partisanship on both sides of the aisle. The two major parties seem to agree on only one thing: perpetuating their own duopoly.

But the duopoly is sick, it's not producing results. It has lost all creativity. No one's listening to anyone. A storm is brewing this year, and it seems possible the Republican Party may even crack in two. That's not necessarily a bad thing. It's happened twice before to the Republican Party in times of political ferment. In 1912, former President Theodore Roosevelt founded the Bull Moose party and nearly won the presidency, easily defeating the incumbent President, William Howard Taft, but losing to Democrat Woodrow Wilson.

In the mid 1850s, the southern faction of the Whig Party split off to become the Know Nothing Party, the Know Nothing Party. That party was driven by three things: anti-immigrant fervor, violent rallies and conspiracy theories. I kid you not. Sound familiar? (Laughter) The Know Nothings disappeared in just three years, but the other half of the Whig Party, rebranded as the Republican Party, went on to elect Abraham Lincoln President of the United States in 1860.

In a number of ways, Gary Johnson reminds me of Abraham Lincoln. For starters, sheer physical strength and endurance. Lincoln's prowess as a rail-splitter was legendary. Gary Johnson is a world class athlete. Not everyone knows this. He has been a contestant in four Iron Man triathlete world championships. He has climbed the highest mountain peak on each of the world's seven continents, climbing Mt. Everest with a broken leg.

When you ask him how he does all that, Gary says, "I just put one foot in front of the other." Again, kind of reminds me of Lincoln, who was a very tall man, was asked how long should a man's legs be. And he said, "Long enough to reach the ground." (Laughter) Sounds like Gary. He has Lincoln's homespun wisdom as well as his discipline and his obvious honesty.

Now, if Honest Gary, Honest Gary, I kind of hope that sticks, you know? If Honest Gary becomes our president, I can assure you there would be no trimming in the White House; no deception, no flimflammy, no appeals to the baser angels of our nature. It's just not in him any more than it was in Abraham Lincoln. As Justice Robert Jackson famously wrote, "Great nations like great men must keep their word." I wish I did not feel it necessary to say this, but I do. Gary and I believe it is important for the United States of America to keep its word. It is important that our president not abrogate our treaty obligations or blatantly violate our agreements with our trading partners, as one of the major party candidates has proposed.

A priceless asset of the United States, which I see all over the world, we are the envy of the world, is that our society and our economy are based on the rule of law. Candidly, Mr. Trump seems to prefer the rule of bullying and bankruptcy. My suggestion to Mr. Trump is tomorrow, instead of talking out *The Art of the Deal*, his book, and rereading it for the 400th time, take out the United States constitution and read it for the first time. (Applause) Just read it once for the first time. This is from the Cato Institute. I've been carrying it around in my pocket for 20 years.

In terms of relations with other countries, Gary and I are inclined towards a presumption of non-intervention restraint where U. S. boots on the ground or blood on foreign soil is concerned. I think we've all seen in recent years that actions to induce regime change can have unseen costs and they're moral as well as economic, and rippling and unintended consequences, both the Middle East and North Africa are examples.

At the same time, we believe strongly that an invincible defense is a bedrock responsibility of the U. S. government which requires that America maintain and demonstrate the most powerful military in the world including air supremacy and naval

supremacy. Notably, we are the only candidates on the ballot this year who believe in free international trade in goods and services, again, guided by the rule of law. (Applause)

In terms of people's personal lives, we are tolerant, we are inclusive. A hundred million people in the United States have smoked dope, don't tell us they're all criminals. Just leave that to the states. Similarly, don't tell us that addiction is only a crime and not a public health emergency, which it is. (Applause) Don't tell us that an 18 year old can lead an army platoon into battle in Fallujah but he can't drink a beer. (Applause)

Now in conclusion, Gary and I have talked about some of the nuts and bolts today that anchor our position as candidates. But I'd like to end by addressing something bigger and more urgent than any single one of those issues, something that may be the most important reason voters really should give Gary Johnson and Bill Weld serious and close consideration. It seems to me that as a nation, the American people have a great big elephant in the room, and I'm not talking about the confused and stumbling Republican elephant or the tired and overworked Democratic donkey, for that matter.

The fact is that both major parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, are struggling, they're having trouble connecting with the usual and natural good will and enthusiasm and support of the American public because the tectonic plates of our democracy are shifting. We are adapting, as all democracies must, to the push and pull of our evolving citizen body and the innovations of our times. But there is no need for transition and change to be a scary or contentious or angry or violent process, as it unfortunately has seemed to be at several points during the major parties' primaries and threatens to be at their upcoming conventions.

The tone of this election season has often seemed to echo that of warfare. People are squaring off and taking aim at each other, their teeth are set on edge, their hearts are filled with anxiety and fear and rage. This is not how we should do things in America.

John Adams once said, "There never was a democracy yet that didn't commit suicide." Gary Johnson and I refuse to stand by and watch as our beloved democracy turns on itself. We're running because we believe we can embrace change and keep America both safe and sane. We propose to work together as a close team with open hearts and minds, with optimism and calm and intelligence with transparency to make sure that every voice is heard and every man, woman and child in this country gets their fair share of the bounty and opportunity and liberty that are the glory of life in these United States. We believe we really can do this. We hope you voters will give us the chance. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. BURR: Thank you, Governors. As a reminder to our audiences on television and radio, the general public is invited to luncheons at the National Press Club so the applause you may hear is not necessarily a sign of the journalists in the audience approving of talking points that were said.

We're going to turn to questions now and I'll try to bounce between both of you, if you don't mind. I think Governor Weld, I think you talked to-- I think the term was flimflammy, which is interesting. As Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump both have serious trust concerns with the majority of voters, how can you reassure the public that they can trust Gary Johnson and Bill Weld to make important decisions for the nation?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, that is the scrutiny that's taking place right now and it's rightful scrutiny. Rising to this level of 10 percent, that's what's happening. And Google Gary Johnson, Google Bill Weld. It's there.

MR. BURR: Governor Weld, do you want to respond?

GOVERNOR WELD: Well, I would just say that if you're governor of a state, particularly a geographically small state like Massachusetts and New Mexico not all that much bigger, there's nowhere to hide. You're really close to the people than the president is to the vast majority of people in this far-flung nation. And we were both two-term governors and if we hadn't been trustworthy, you would have known it and we wouldn't have been two-term governors. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. BURR: Governor Johnson, the questioner wants to know, do you talk more votes away from Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: In the polls where they've actually done an analysis, to this point we've taken more votes away from Hillary, but by a margin that really is not even discernible. I think that it will be equally from both sides and this is a two-party dinosaur. We think we're going to be the comet in this equation. (Applause)

MR. BURR: You've talked about Googling you guys a little bit. I'm assuming Google is not underwriting your campaign. But even in a year when voters seem very unsatisfied with the nominees of the major parties, what are the biggest obstacles you find to breaking through as Libertarians?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: The biggest obstacle right now is just appearing in the polls. Right now, we're an afterthought. Right now, it's Clinton and it's Trump and that's the poll that gets reported. And then as an afterthought, occasionally you'll have Gary Johnson, Bill Weld added as the afterthought. If at the very onset they would poll Johnson, Trump, Clinton, I think that that would result in the 15 percent that we need to be in the presidential debates and the added scrutiny that will go along with that. That's what we really need at this point, is just more scrutiny.

MR. BURR: Just to clarify, you're saying that you would just like a three-way poll. You don't want other people being included, just the Clinton, Trump, Johnson?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: We're suing the President Debate Commission, that's our America initiative. That's my political arm. We're suing the Presidential Debate Commission on the basis of if you're on the ballot in enough states to mathematically be

elected, that you should be included in the presidential debates. Although we're paying for this lawsuit, 100 percent of this lawsuit, we included the Green Party in the lawsuit also from the standpoint of fairness. It's my understanding that the Green Party will be on the ballot in 37 of the 50 states and can, in fact, garner 270 electoral votes. We're going to be the only third party on the ballot in all 50 states.

MR. BURR: Governor Weld?

GOVERNOR WELD: Let me just add that I'm actually not concerned or worried about this percentage point that the question makes. So you're at seven, eight, nine, ten percent now. Actually, Gary's polled at 11, 12, 13 in some national polls. He's polled at 16 to 19 in a number of states. He polls ahead of Mrs. Clinton among independents in a couple polls, which is very interesting.

But it lies in my mind that when Donald Trump started last year, he was not even one percent, he was an asterisk in the polls and not taken seriously. As Gary mentioned, we've been at this for a month and we're at, say, consensus 10 percent and we haven't begun to fight. So the numbers, I think-- I won't say they'll take care of themselves, but we're going to take care of the numbers. (Applause)

MR. BURR: Governor Johnson, you garnered one percent of the vote in 2012. What do you believe you can do this year to actually get above that as a ticket in this cycle?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: People said to me in 2012, "Gee, it's too bad you never caught on." In 2012, I started to run as a Republican and the issue was, was that in the debates for the Republican Party, they would issue criteria that would say you had to be at two percent in A, C, C and D polls. Well, when you're not in A, B, C poll and you're only in D poll, that means you have to be at eight percent. Point is, in 2012, whenever my name appeared in a poll, I was equal to or ahead of those on stage.

This year, my name is being included in the polls. In 2012, I don't need to tell you this, I was not included in one national poll running for president, not one. Now, the trajectory, or the level of support in 2012 was-- this was the trajectory line. Well, at election date, that was 1.3 million votes. I was really disappointed, but I was told to not discount 1.3 million votes, that that was very significant.

Well, the trend has continued. This has been the trend line since 2012. But now that it's at 10 percent, it's getting noticed, right? Well, trend lines don't go from this to this. Trend lines at some point do this, but this is the phenomenon. This is the difference in 2012 as we've finally broken through a level that gets us noticed.

MR. BURR: So following on that Governor, 10 percent doesn't get you elected president. So do you worry about being perceived as a spoiler to the major party candidates such as Ross Perot in '92 or Ralph Nader in 2000?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: I will lose no sleep if that is the label given to me, and I will reiterate; this is a party that needs crashing.

GOVERNOR WELD: What's to spoil?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: What's to spoil? (Applause)

MR. BURR: Governor Weld, a couple of questions for you, if I could. You were a former DOJ official. Do you believe Loretta Lynch overstepped her bounds by meeting with Bill Clinton?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, I didn't know she had much choice about it. I think he stepped onto her plane. But, I've not been as troubled by the whole email affair as many have. I thought Jim Comey did a good job with it, and I thought his conclusion that no reasonable prosecutor would indict that case was the correct conclusion.

MR. BURR: Just to clarify, do either of you have private email servers? Yes?

GOVERNOR WELD: Several.

MR. BURR: Governor, actually while I have you for a second, Governor Weld, you've been, I believe, in good terms with Secretary Clinton since you were young staffers in D.C. in 1974. And President Clinton nominated you to be ambassador to Mexico. The questioner wants to know why are you challenging her with a third party candidacy rather than trying to have her move to more libertarian views?

GOVERNOR WELD: Well, I think Gary and I represent the views of a majority of the people of the United States. As we've said, we're fiscally responsible, and we're way, well open and inclusive and tolerant on social issues. Our old party, the Republican Party, isn't there. The Democratic Party, to be honest, is not there. They're not the party of fiscal restraint. Those are not the dueling promises you heard during the Democratic primary. So I think Gary and I consider this a-- it's a great pleasure and an honor to stand before the American people this year. But it's also something of a duty, and I feel particularly that way because of the absence of substance and the unappealing tone of a lot of the statements made by the presumptive Republican nominee, Mr. Trump.

I was a federal prosecutor for seven years. I was head of the criminal division of the Department of Justice. I've spent a lot of time in a courtroom and I look forward to the opportunity of trying to help dissect the statements made by Mr. Trump so that people can better understand their basis or lack of basis.

MR. BURR: Governor Johnson, how does a Libertarian in today's world determine what is self defense from an international perspective?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, make no mistake that if we're attacked, we're going to attack back. I reject the notion that Libertarians are isolationist. We're non-

interventionists. The fact that we intervene and that the interventions have the unintended consequence of making things less safe. We want to rule the world with free trade and democracy.

MR. BURR: Okay. Let me follow on that to ask about-- we've already intervened, for example, Iraq, Afghanistan. What would you do as president with ISIS? What would you do in Afghanistan?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, you can't make this up and it wasn't intentional. But if you look at Syria and Libya, we go in and we back the moderate opposition in both of those countries and the moderate or the opposition is aligned with ISIS and Al-Qaeda, the jihadists. Was this intentional? Well, it's what happened. You can't make it up.

With regard to Afghanistan, look, I supported Afghanistan from the beginning. We were attacked, we attacked back, but we had accomplished defeating Al-Qaeda after a very short amount of time and we should have gotten out. We should get out of Afghanistan immediately. And I'm not saying that that's not going to have consequence, but it is consequence that we can deal with. And by consequence, we don't want to put those that have been allied with the United States in harm's way, that if we pull out there's going to be some sort of genocide that takes place. We can take care of that.

But look, if we pull out of Afghanistan 20 years from now, the consequence is going to be the same as if we pull out immediately. And are we really going to stay in Afghanistan forever?

GOVERNOR WELD: Can I just add?

MR. BURR: Please, Governor.

GOVERNOR WELD: Just before the United States went into Afghanistan, a high level CIA delegation was sent to Moscow just to make sure that the Russians weren't going to go berserk when we came into a country militarily that was so close to them. And the administration was a little worried about that reaction, not wanting to set off a huge international incident. The Russians laughed and laughed and laughed and said, "You all go right into Afghanistan. You just have all the fun you want there." The Russians had had the example of the British Empire before them. We had the example of both the British and the Russians.

MR. BURR: You've talked about one of the biggest struggles you have is just getting attention. How do you as third party candidates in this age of Donald Trump and the constant media attention he gets, how do you break through? How do you do something to get the attention from the media?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, make no mistake that the media does present, really, two candidates for office. But make no mistakes that we are getting attention,

unprecedented attention. We released a campaign video on Thursday of last week and we've gotten in excess of five million views. That is just unheard of. So there is an appetite out there, and it's a huge appetite and we just intend to be that main course.
(Applause)

MR. BURR: This questioner notes that both of you are very civil and politically correct. As the presidential elections get heated, nasty and personal, how do you and Governor Weld plan to take the gloves off and compete in this environment?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: I ran two campaigns for governor of New Mexico where I did not mention my opponent in print, radio or television. I just think people are hungry to vote for someone as opposed to the lesser of two evils. And that is something that's being exemplified in this race beyond any race that I've ever seen before. He said, she said; he said, she said. Look, this should be about the issues and it should be about a debate, and it should be about a debate on what the other candidates are saying. That's fair game.

When I ran for reelection in New Mexico, I was in the incumbent. We did a poll right after I got the nomination running for reelection. I was up by ten points. Conventional wisdom, I controlled the debate process. How many times should I have debated my opponent? Well, little or none. My choice, I debated my opponent 28 times. I think government is about transparency, I think running for office is about debate and discussion, revolving issues and not what we currently have going on.

GOVERNOR WELD: So in 1996, I ran an unsuccessful race challenging Senator John Kerry of Massachusetts. The stakes were pretty high, it was pretty much of a marquee race. We were both at the height of our power, 75 percent popularity. Nobody wouldn't say that that wasn't a hard fought, fair and equal fight. We agreed very early on to eight debates, eight televised debates. Go back and look at them if you want to see whether they were vigorous and hard fought, but also civil; they were. And I think that sort of sets a standard. We agreed, personally, we negotiated an agreement, to limit campaign spending to \$8 million in that race. We could easily have raised 25 or 50 million dollars, but we thought it would be better to have more time for substance in the campaign. So it can be done that way, and it was.

MR. BURR: Since we're talking about campaign finance, Governor Johnson, you struggled a little bit in 2012 with raising donations. Have donations improved this year, and how much money do you believe you will raise this cycle to compete?

GOVERNOR WELD: So I told Gary when signing on that I very much enjoy fundraising. I was Pete Wilson's national finance chair when he ran for president, was Mitt Romney's co-chair in New York City, which was a big part of his campaign and I do enjoy it. People are writing 50,000 and 100,000 checks. Again, I've just been at this now 10, 14 days. But the money looks to be still there from my old friends through surrogates and through my own races. And new friends as well who are, frankly, a lot of them think the Libertarian message is kind of a breath of fresh air. I think at the end of the day, if we

haven't raised well into the millions of dollars we won't be taken seriously. So that would be a minimum standard. We're not going to have a billion dollars to compete with Mrs. Clinton, but if we're in the debates, that's an almost unlimited amount of so-called earned media and the web and the internet has changed so much that, again, I'm not worried about that being outcome determinative.

MR. BURR: It seems like a lot of the campaign is based on the concept of getting into the debates to actually compete. What happens, though, if you do not get in the debates?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, if we don't get in the debates, we keep active in the campaign and we raise issues that need to be raised. We say things that need to be said that aren't being said. But we wouldn't be doing this if we didn't think that that was not just possible, but that it actually is going to happen.

MR. BURR: Governor Johnson, you said you want to take the best ideas from both parties. So what are the best Democratic ideas and what are the best GOP ideas?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, when you look at the Republican Party, they're supposed to be about smaller government, first and foremost, but they're anything but. But you could challenge them to be that, and I think there's a unique opportunity here as Libertarians to challenge Republicans in what they should be good at, which is smaller government. But Republicans, you know what? They pick and choose and after all is said and done, budgets are still big. They're just in areas that Republicans want to spend money on.

And then Democrats, how about challenging them on civil liberties? Look, we have the highest incarceration rate of any country in the world. That's mandatory sentencing, that's the war on drugs. Challenge Democrats on those issues. Let's bring an end to that. Marriage equality, just so many initiatives that Democrats could embrace, but that's not happening, either. Both parties being all about spending and nothing about results.

GOVERNOR WELD: Can I have a swing at that?

MR. BURR: Please?

GOVERNOR WELD: My favorite Republican Party ideas are generally introducing more competition, both into the government and into the economy. I think in areas as diverse as healthcare, virtually every department of the federal government could profit from the introduction of more competition.

When I was governor, I was chairman of the National Council on Public/Private Partnerships, which I think are very promising and Republicans generally are friendly to those ideas.

On the Democratic side, and I'm not saying no Republicans agree with this, but causing wages to rise obviously is something that has to happen right now to scratch the itch that has been vexing the United States. I myself, my first year, greatly increased the earned income tax credit, which is a way of helping the working poor, the poor SOB who has a wife and two kids and is making \$27,000 a year. That person falls in a gap between welfare and comfort. And the earned income tax credit is both a state and a national tool for addressing that. More aggressive retraining and resettlement policies by the government when-- and industry like the auto industry, say, moves out of a geographic area, would be helpful as well.

An emphasis on free trade. Free trade creates high wage jobs for the United States because of our edge in productivity. You might lose a few low wage jobs, but you gain more high wage jobs. You can target industries, I did this in Massachusetts, targeting biotech, software and telecom because the average wage in those industries in 1991 was over \$50,000, which was a big number. So we gave those industries what they wanted and they grew. That may be a violation of Republican orthodoxy because it's not a zero on so-called industrial policy. But I'm not a zero, I'm a four and we got results there.

When I took over in 1991, we had the highest unemployment rate of the 11 industrialized states. At the end of my first term, we had the lowest. It went from almost 10 percent to 4 and change. And I think it was a result of those policies.

MR. BURR: Governor Johnson, you mentioned the war on drugs for a second. Let's talk about that. I have a lot of questions submitted about marijuana. I believe you want to leave it up to the states to decide. How far do you go on legalizing drugs? Does that include marijuana, heroin, meth, other drugs?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: The only drug that I'm advocating legalizing is marijuana. And I do think that that is going to happen. As president of the United States, I can de-schedule marijuana as a class one narcotic. Let me predict that California is going to vote to legalize marijuana recreationally. Of the 25 states now that have medicinal marijuana, of the four states that are recreational and the District of Columbia, all of that has happened at the ballot box with just a few exceptions.

I'm going to predict that when California votes to legalize marijuana that legislatures will embrace it and just make it happen. And that this will be the tipping point for legalizing marijuana.

I think when we legalize marijuana, we're going to take a quantum leap when it comes to understanding drugs and drug problems and that first and foremost, it's a health issue, it's not a criminal justice issue. When we talk about heroin, and I am not advocating the legalization of heroin. We don't know how to do that, all right? But with the heroin epidemic right now, the opioid overdose situation, when you look at cities like Amsterdam that have implemented harm reduction strategies, strategies that reduce death, disease, crime and corruption, that's exactly what they've done.

When we look at cities here in the United States, cities have the opportunity, for example, if you want to really address the heroin overdose issue, open up health department labs that would actually test heroin for their consistency, their quality. And I guarantee you that for those that participated in being able to bring in their heroin dose to be tested that there would be less overdose. When you provide clean needles, needle exchange programs, you reduce hepatitis C and HIV significantly. So there are so many strategies out there for reducing the things that we really care about. And I'm believing that those strategies will take a real foothold after we start off with marijuana.

And very quickly, marijuana, legal prescription drugs statistically kill 100,000 people a year. Marijuana products? Not one documented death. On the recreational side, I have always maintained that legalizing marijuana will lead to less overall substance abuse because it's so much safer than everything else that's out there starting with alcohol. In Colorado, the campaign to legalize marijuana was a campaign based on marijuana is safer than alcohol.

GOVERNOR WELD: Can I just say Gary's not out there by himself on this. When I was in office, I supposed methadone programs and needle exchange programs. Maybe we were both out there because I took a lot of heat for that. But these ideas have been around since the '90s and they're not-- they weren't just invented.

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: In 1997, Bill Weld was nominated for ambassador to Mexico. Let me just refresh your memory. Jesse Helms blocked his nomination because he was pro-gay, he was pro a woman's right to choose, and he was pro medical marijuana, as per Jesse Helms. In 1997, that was me on trial also.

MR. BURR: Governor Johnson, we've had several questions submitted about this, so I'm just going to ask it. When was the last time you smoked or ingested marijuana?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: I did this about two months ago, it's been about two months. And when you tell the truth, really, you don't have anything to fear. I've always maintained that you shouldn't be on the job impaired. Well, as of two months ago, really this is a 24/7 job running for president of the United States. And as president of the United States, that is also a 24/7 job. So, in my lifetime, I think I have more than demonstrated my ability to be self disciplined. I haven't had a drink of alcohol in 29 years. I wasn't an alcoholic, it had everything to do with rock climbing and the immediacy of rock climbing and being the best that you could possibly be. But this is the truth component that I think is really also lacking in politics.

Who would know that I ingested marijuana products two months ago? My best friends and if I'd have said, "Hey, I don't use it, or I haven't used them," my best friends would consider me a hypocrite. And I think hypocrisy is the one unforgivable in life. Doing one thing and saying another. (Applause)

MR. BURR: Just to clarify, are you saying that if elected president, you would not ingest or smoke marijuana as president?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: That is correct, yes.

MR. BURR: All right, switching to another subject real fast, so you get your wish. Four years from now we're in the waning days of the first term of the Johnson/Weld administration. What does America look like?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, this is an experience experienced by citizens in New Mexico. It's an outlook experience by citizens in Massachusetts. Wow, things look-- there's a fairness to all this. There is an absolute equality in leadership. It's transparent. It's honest. I might disagree, but what I see is a process where issues are looked at first, and politics are last on the agenda if they even exist at all.

GOVERNOR WELD: I would say people will be happier. I always made it plain in Massachusetts that I wanted folks to have a good time. And at the end of my tenure there, at the end of my tenure, I think they were happier. And it's more general than that. I've said that President Eisenhower and President Reagan succeeded in making people feel good about being Americans, and that's something. That was my close in my prepared remarks. That's something Gary and I very much want to do, and I think that's something that if you put your mind to it with a willing heart and you really want it to happen, you can make people feel better about themselves.

MR. BURR: Gentlemen, win or lose, what do you believe you can do this year to make the Libertarian Party a sustainable threat to the Democratic and Republican Parties?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Well, win or lose, this is a win and it really is a win for the Libertarian Party, bringing attention to the Libertarian Party and its principles. And as I told-- as both of us presented to the Libertarian Party, look, we're kind of in the middle when it comes to the Libertarian Party. I think as a result of this candidacy, the Libertarian Party moves from the clubhouse to the auditorium and those within the Libertarian Party can make the pitch to a much bigger audience. And I think most people in this country are Libertarian, it's just that they don't know it.

MR. BURR: Governor, if you're elected, how would you work with a Congress that would include no Libertarians?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: This is a huge opportunity. I mean, don't you see it? Challenging Republicans, come on. (Applause) Cut government and that doesn't mean Planned Parenthood. Come on, cut government, genuinely, smaller government, less government, smaller government. Democrats, come on, end the wars, stop the bombing, stop the interventions, stop flying drones that are killing thousands of innocent people. Get involved, Congress, in a declaration of war and a path going forward when it comes to our foreign policy. This is a big opportunity. This is a big opportunity that neither a

Democrat or a Republican are going to be able to lay claim to because they're so polarized. (Applause)

GOVERNOR WELD: I think it would be an advantage that our appointees would not have been chosen on the basis of party loyalty so people wouldn't be suspicious of working with our appointees. They would know that roughly half were Republicans and roughly half were Democrats and that they were not among the most partisan. Somebody's got to bell the cat. Somebody's got to take the first step in getting away from this hyper partisanship. We would, by definition, because of not being either Republicans or Democrats. And I think that might give us an entering wedge. I can't believe at the end of the day that the people who serve in Washington and Congress really want to have the country perceive that the capital has sunk in partisan gridlock. I mean, if they could get away from it, I think they would. I know most of the members. They're very decent people, including people who are demonized in the press every single day. They're very decent people and given the opportunity I think they could work together with each other as well as with us.

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: And back to those appointees, look, whether they're Democrats or they're Republicans, I guarantee you they're going to have a Libertarian bent on the world. (Applause)

MR. BURR: Let me ask this really quickly, given the news the last couple of days with two black men who were shot and killed by police officers. What policies would you plan to pursue to address that issue?

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: One of the things I really enjoyed about being governor was bringing to the table the people that should know the most about this. So when you look at these shootings, which communities in this country have the best record when it comes to police violence? Which communities in this country have the worst records when it comes to police violence? There are going to be common threads within the best, there are going to be common threads within the worst. The Department of Justice comes into play here and I have to think that we can improve on things.

MR. BURR: Thank you, Governors. Before I ask the final question, a few announcements. First, a reminder. The National Press Club is the world's leading professional organization for journalists and we fight for a free press worldwide. For more information about the club, please go to www.press.org. Once again, that's press.org.,

I'd also like to remind you about some upcoming programs. On July 14, Admiral Mike Rogers, the Director of the National Security Agency, will speak at the Press Club luncheon. On August 1st, Jonathan Jarvis, the Director of the National Park Service, will be here. And August 14, award-winning actor Michael York will speak at this podium.

Now I would like to present our guests with the traditional National Press Club mugs. It's empty, gentlemen, sorry. (Laughter)

And my last question. I'm going to tee this up for you, gentlemen. If you had to choose between the two, would you vote for Donald Trump or Hillary Clinton? No one wants to go first.

GOVERNOR JOHNSON: Look, the Libertarian Party's been around since the early '70s. There's always been a Libertarian candidate for president. I'd vote Libertarian. (Applause)

GOVERNOR WELD: I conceive of it as part of my role in this campaign to try to hold Mr. Trump's feet to the fire and have him change the manner in which he's waging his candidacy. And if that did not happen, he would leave me with very little choice. Thank you.

MR. BURR: Gentlemen, thank you very much for speaking at the National Press Club. I'd like to thank the staff of the National Press Club and the staff of the National Press Club Journalism Institute. Thank you, we are adjourned. (Sounds gavel.)

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