

Bitcoins, marijuana and Kanye West: A look at the Libertarian candidates

Written by By Andy Lyman NM Political Report
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Gadfly politicians, offensive soundbites and mind-numbing personal attacks are dominating media coverage of the presidential race this election season. And it's not just in the Republican and Democratic races.

Former Republican New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson is hoping to capitalize on the negative tones of the Democratic and Republican primaries and legitimize his third party candidacy to voters disgusted with the two-party system this fall. But first he must beat a crop of candidates, some of whom who are more eccentric than a Trump, Sanders, Cruz or Carson could ever dream of being.

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Currently 15 candidates are vying for a nomination from the Libertarian Party, all pushing for smaller government. We take a look at Johnson and two of his challengers who last week garnered national spotlight on John Stossel's Fox Business Network TV show. We also look at some of the other notable candidates who will face off against Johnson at the Libertarian Party convention this Memorial Day weekend.

Besides Johnson, the two Libertarian Party candidates getting the most national media coverage are software developer John McAfee and online free-market news and opinion site founder Austin Petersen.

Johnson is hoping to become the Libertarian nominee for a second presidential election in a row. In 2012 Johnson originally ran for president as a Republican, but switched to the Libertarian Party ticket after organizers excluded him from a series of televised debates. Johnson later filed an antitrust lawsuit against the Commission on Presidential Debates for allegedly colluding to keep third parties out of debates.

As New Mexico's governor from 1995-2003, Johnson vetoed a record number of bills, prompting the nickname "Governor No." During the last presidential election, he received one percent of the popular vote or about 1.2 million votes. Johnson has also made a name for himself as the first governor to speak out in favor of legalizing marijuana. He also became CEO of a cannabis company since 2012, leaving the position to again run for president.

McAfee, a free-market answer of sorts to eccentric billionaire Richard Branson, has established himself as a frontrunner within the Libertarian Party with platform issues like national cyber security and privacy rights for U.S. citizens. Once the owner of a large piece of land in New Mexico, McAfee made headlines when he was named as a person of interest in the death of his neighbor in Belize.

McAfee fled the country, entered Guatemala illegally and was eventually deported to Miami. Since then, Belize officials seem to have dropped any investigation into McAfee. He has repeatedly stated that the Belize government is corrupt and often uses his experience there to illustrate what he calls the overreach of federal government.

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Austin Petersen, who created the libertarian news and opinion site The Libertarian Republic, has been getting a lot of media attention as a relatively new face in politics. At 35 years old, Petersen makes the age cutoff for President by a year. He also stands out as the only frontrunner in the party that has an anti-abortion platform.

His campaign website states that he will “encourage a culture of life, and adoption, and educate Americans about the ‘consistent pro-life ethic,’ which also means abolishing the death penalty.”

See some of the other 12 candidates vying for the Libertarian Party nomination, including candidates who refuse to accept federal currency and have asked a famous rapper to be his running mate. Visit: www.nmpoliticalreport.com

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