



Written by [Jack Kenny](#) on August 29, 2012

Libertarian Candidate Claims GOP Immigration Plank “Borders on Racist”

In a wide-ranging [interview](#) with Alex Pareene of *Salon.com*, Libertarian Party candidate for President Gary Johnson claimed the Republican Party’s platform plank on immigration “borders on racist.” The former border-state governor spoke of a radical “disconnect” between the rhetoric and reality on illegal immigration.



“It’s anti-immigration. It borders on racist,” Johnson, a former governor of New Mexico, said of the platform proposals that include a call for completion of a double layer fence along the nearly 2,000 miles of border between the United States and Mexico; an end to federal Justice Department lawsuits against state laws like those of Arizona and Alabama that authorize state authorities to apprehend and detain illegal immigrants; and a denial of federal funding for colleges and universities that enroll illegal immigrants at the same tuition as legal in-state residents. It also calls for a requirement for employers nationwide to verify the legal status of their workers. Johnson also disagrees with calls from either party for a greater armed presence to stop illegal crossings and the drug trafficking and shooting wars at and near the border.

“Neither party will suggest this but if border violence is a problem, we could probably take care of that by addressing the revenue source of the cartels,” Johnson said. “Everyone is suggesting that border violence be addressed with more guns. As opposed to the root cause, which is prohibition of drugs. Romney in the second debate said, and I quote, ‘It’s a no-brainer that we should build a fence.’ Well, I don’t have a molecule of brain based on that. It’s my adamant position that that would be a waste. Of time, of resources, and we really don’t have enough of either.”

An advocate of open borders, Johnson said in [interview](#) with *Rolling Stone* magazine last year: “We should make it as easy as possible to get a legal work visa — not citizenship, not a green card. Just a work visa, with a background check and a Social security card so that applicable taxes would be paid.” He argued in the same interview that deporting non-legal residents costs, rather than saves, jobs for Americans.



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"Because of our convoluted immigration policies, we're educating the best and brightest kids from all over the world and we're sending them back to their countries of origin. Instead of them staying here to start up businesses that will employ tens of millions of Americans, they go home and employ tens of millions of Indians," Johnson said.

Much of the debate over immigration policy in recent years has centered on the question of whether American citizens and taxpayers can afford to bear the immediate costs of illegal immigration for the sake of long-term benefits promised by opponents of strict enforcement of immigration laws. A [study](#) released two years ago by the Federation for American Immigration Reform, found that illegal immigration costs federal, state and local governments \$113 billion a year. Not surprisingly, open-border supporters dismiss such findings.

Johnson, 59, was a popular two-term governor (January 1, 1995 to January 1, 2003) of New Mexico, who won reelection in 1998 with 55 percent of the vote. Limited by state law to two terms, he left office in 2003 with a record that impressed both conservatives and libertarians, having signed 14 tax cuts into law, while vetoing some 750 bills and leaving the state a \$1 billion surplus. A longtime opponent of the federal government's "war on drugs," Johnson became "the highest-ranking elected official in the US to advocate legalizing marijuana," the *Christian Science Monitor* [reported](#).

Yet he went mostly unnoticed as a Republican candidate for President during last year's beginning of the primary campaign. He was shut out of most of the televised debates, supposedly based on polling data that consistently showed him at or below two percent, though other candidates who were included were doing little or no better. ("What does two terms as governor get you?" he [asked](#).)

He dropped out of the Republican primary race on December 28, just a few days before the first contest in the Iowa caucuses. He announced he would pursue the nomination of the Libertarian Party, which he secured at the party's convention in Las Vegas on May 5th.

On the eve of the Republican convention, Johnson was in Tampa, looking to drum up support for his third-party candidacy among supporters of Texas Congressman Ron Paul, with whom he shares a number of political convictions, including an aversion to interventionist foreign policies and opposition to the war on drugs. Johnson endorsed Paul's bid for the Republican nomination in 2008 and urged Republican voters to support the tenacious Texan again in 2012 primaries, following his own withdrawal from the contests. He said in his interview with *Salon* that he had thought the presence of two libertarian-minded candidates in the Republican contest would have made it harder for the party and the media to dismiss their ideas.

"I thought it was going to be harder to marginalize two than one, but I got completely taken out, and I think Ron Paul got marginalized," he said.

Still, Johnson continues to praise the "Ron Paul revolution" and his campaign website features a video that is both a tribute to the Paul campaign and invitation to the Texan's supporters to continue the "revolution" by supporting Johnson's candidacy. He predicts he will be on the ballot in all 50 states, despite Republican opposition. The Libertarian candidate says he feels "abandoned" by the Republican Party, which he sees as moving steadily away from principles of liberty. He is especially critical in that regard of Rep. Paul Ryan of Wisconsin, about to be nominated as the party's candidate for vice president.

"This guy's supported the wars, this guy's proposed a balanced budget in 28 years, assuming growth. This guy voted for the Patriot Act. This guy voted for the National Defense Authorization Act," Johnson



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said in apparent reference to a provision of the NDAA that authorizes the military arrest and indefinite detention without trial of people, including American citizens, suspected of collaborating with terrorists against the United States. The irony, said Johnson, is that “they’ve nominated what is supposed to be the boldest Republican on the budget, and if that’s the boldest that the Republicans have, then now we’re back to the Republicans being relegated to a third party, because of abandoning what is historically supposed to be Republican.”

Asked if he will run again in 2016, Johnson told *Salon*, “It’s possible. And that possibility would rest on having momentum on Election Day, and based on my experience to this point that will be the case, I will have momentum going into Election Day. Now whether that momentum equates to 1 percent or 15 percent remains to be seen.”

Photo: In this Sept 23, 2011 file photo, Libertarian Party presidential candidate, former New Mexico Gov. Gary Johnson speaks in Orlando, Fla.: AP Images



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