

Ed. Notes-Johnson spoke in front of a banner that had a huge image of his face and the slogan "When Gary Johnson Goes To Washington, Everybody Goes." Brinck Slattery, state coordinator for the OUR America Initiative, introduced Michael Harrington "former Public Utilities Commissioner, state representative and longtime state activist," who introduced Johnson. Johnson spoke for about 20 min. 50 sec., then took questions. The speech doesn't break a lot of new ground; for example it is similar to the speech he gave at [CPAC](#) in February. He repeats the seemingly impossible proposal he put forth there ("I'm advocating balancing the federal budget tomorrow.") Johnson went off on a few tangents, and there is not really a stirring call to "come join the crusade." Curiously, the [statement](#) the campaign issued on Johnson's announcement has considerably different and more punchy rhetoric.

**Former Gov. Gary Johnson (R-NM)
Announcement of Candidacy
Capitol Front Steps
Concord, NH**

Thursday, April 21, 2011

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MICHAEL HARRINGTON: Thank you and good morning. This morning I'm here to introduce who I hope will be the next President of the United States, Gary Johnson. Gary's a former two-term governor from New Mexico and during that time he cast more vetoes than any other governor in the country, in fact more than all of them combined. He was not willing to compromise on core principles like taxes. He's more than just a governor though, or an ex-governor. He's also a former businessman; he owned his own company that employed over a thousand people. He's a great athlete; he's climbed many high altitude peaks including Mount Everest. And he's a new type of leader that we need in the United States. He maintains core Republican principles like smaller size government and less taxes but also believes in personal responsibility and personal freedom. He's the new leader we need, and it gives me a great pleasure to support someone for president that I can say—not like I have like most of the times in the past—that he's a lesser of two evils; he's not as bad as the other guy. Gary is someone I can truly support and I hope he will be the next President of the United States. Gary Johnson.

GARY JOHNSON: Well this is the first time I get to say this, but I am running for President of the United States. And to do that, I think you have to have a certain resume to be able to do that and I like to think that I do have it.

I've been an entrepreneur my entire life, ever since I've been 13 years old, I've been an entrepreneur throwing newspapers, doing lawns. Since I've been 17 years old I've paid for everything that I've had in my life, and when I was 21 years old, when I was a junior in college, I started a one man handyman business in Albuquerque, me, and 20 years later actually employed a thousand people—electrical, mechanical, plumbing, pipefitting. American Dream come true. Naively when I was elected Governor of New Mexico, being Governor of New Mexico and being in business wasn't really a plus, and so we weren't getting the work that we should have. So in 1999 I sold that business. Nobody lost their job, and that business is doing better than ever.

Entrepreneurally I ran for Governor of New Mexico. I had never been involved in politics prior to running for Governor of New Mexico. I went and I introduced myself to the Republican Party, much like I'm doing right now. But I introduced myself to the Republican Party a couple of weeks before I announced and John Latoosie, who was the chairman of the Republican Party in New Mexico, he said man, I like you, the Republican Party's going to love you. We're an open party so when it comes to running for Governor of New Mexico it's going to be an open process, you're going to get to take part in the debates and the discussions that'll go on statewide. And of course I'm thinking this is all I could ever ask for. And then he says, I just think you're great, but you need to know that you'll never get elected, that it's not possible to come from

completely outside of politics and get elected Governor in a state that's two to one Democrat.

Well I got elected, and I would like to think it was based on what I had to say, and it's what I have to say right now. Everything should be a cost-benefit analysis. What are we spending our money on and what are we getting for the money we're spending. So in New Mexico I think I was more outspoken than any governor in the country regarding school choice. I really believe in free markets. I really believe that bringing in this case educational entrepreneurs to bear when it comes to education would really make a difference. So I did that in New Mexico.

I probably, it may be a bit of an embellishment, but I may have vetoed more bills, when you consider the line items that I also vetoed in New Mexico, I may have vetoed more legislation than the other 49 governors in the country combined. And it wasn't just saying no. It was really looking at what we were spending our money on and what we were getting for the money that we were spending. And I really do believe in smaller government. I really believe that there are consequences of legislation that gets passed, and maybe it isn't in our best interest[s?] to pass all the legislation that we pass, that it layers, that it layers bureaucracy on transactions that aren't made any safer by you and I, but that just end up just making it so much more cumbersome, so much more burdensome and ends up adding a lot of money as opposed to the notion of liberty and freedom and the personal responsibility that goes along with that.

As Governor of New Mexico, I think I raised a dialogue regarding the war on drugs. It was just an extension of everything that I did as Governor of New Mexico which was what are we spending our money on and what are we getting for the money that we're spending.

So I'm outraged over the fact that this country is bankrupt. And how did we get here? How did we get ourselves into this position? My entire life, I've watched government spend more money than what it takes in, and I've just always thought that there would be a day of reckoning with regard to that spending. And I think that day of reckoning is here and that it's right now, and that it needs to be fixed. So who's responsible?

A week ago I'm asked, should President Obama's health care plan be repealed? Yes, I think that President Obama's health care plan should be repealed because we simply can't afford it. But what I said then and I'll say now, I think Republicans would gain a lot of credibility in this argument if Republicans would offer up a repeal of the prescription health care benefit that they passed when they controlled both houses of Congress and ran up record deficits. Now those record deficits and that spending is pale in comparison to today, but the point is both parties can share in where we've gotten to right now. I think we're on the verge of a financial collapse in this country. And it's, the writing's on the wall. This isn't fear-mongering, this is we are going to encounter a financial collapse because quite simply we can't repay \$14 trillion in debt when we're racking up \$1.65 trillion in debt going forward. It's just, it's not going to happen.

So I'm advocating balancing the federal budget tomorrow. I don't have a 20-year plan for balancing the federal budget. The plan for balancing the federal budget is tomorrow. And that's \$1.65 trillion in reduced federal spending. You know that the debate and the discussion that went on a couple of weeks ago regarding government reduced spending was we need to be cutting government spending by 43 cents. What went on two weeks ago was about less than one penny, and it turns out after some analysis that it actually was like one one-hundredth of a penny of the 43 cents that we need to cut when it comes to federal spending. So we need to play out what happened in Washington a couple of weeks ago hundreds of more times if we're going to actually bring this to bear.

And when you talk about balancing the federal budget, I think it's important to start out by talking about

Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security. It's not cutting Social Security; it's really making Social Security solvent so it's reforming Social Security. And it's defense spending. When it comes to Medicaid and Medicare, I think the federal government could simply block grant the states a fixed amount of money which would be 43 percent less than what we're currently spending, do away with all the strings, all the mandates, and give states the ability to deliver health care to the poor and those over 65. And that would be 50 laboratories of innovation. And I'll be talking about this this whole time running for President, the notion that this is about 50 states. That constitutionally this is country that we have. Our 50 laboratories of innovation all out in this notion of best practices, best practices get emulated. Of course there's going to be failure; failure gets avoided. But the notion that Washington knows best has us in the position that we're in right now, which is bankrupt.

When it comes to Social Security, Social Security is a problem that is pale in comparison to Medicare. Medicare is going to engulf the entire federal budget here in a very short amount of time if it's not brought under control, but Social Security, very simply. It's a system that needs to take in more money than what it pays out. So without raising taxes when it comes to Social Security, you could raise the retirement age, you could have means testing, you could change the escalator that's built into Social Security from the wage index to the inflation index. That third item would, as I understand it, in and of itself make Social Security solvent into the future.

And then when it comes to defense spending, can we cut 43-percent of our defense budget and still maintain a strong national defense? I believe that we can and we have an obligation to do that. We have an obligation to provide ourselves with a strong national defense, but I think a strong national defense is way different than what we're currently engaged in which in my opinion is just nation-building all across the world when we have our own nation to build. I would have been opposed to Iraq at the get-go. I thought we had the military surveillance capability to see Iraq roll out any weapons of mass destruction. If they would have done that I felt like we could have gone in and militarily addressed that situation. I thought if we went into Iraq we would find ourselves in a civil war to which there would be no end. Afghanistan, initially I thought that was totally warranted. That's what we have a military for. We were attacked; we attacked back. We are at war with Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda and we should remain vigilant to the terrorist threat, but after being in Afghanistan for about six months we'd effectively taken out al Qaeda. That was ten years ago. We're building roads, schools, bridges, highways and hospitals in Iraq and Afghanistan and we're borrowing 43 cents out of every dollar to do that. In my opinion that is just crazy. I think we should get out of Iraq and Afghanistan tomorrow. And for all the debate and discussion that we will have over that issue, all of which will be warranted, I just suggest to you we will have that same debate and discussion 25 years from now if that's when we finally decide to get out. And in the meantime we're going to continue to spend more money in those locations; we're going to continue to spend money that we don't have and worse yet a whole lot more men and servicewomen are going to end up losing their lives.

Libya. In the environment that I'm in right now, I've got to issue an opinion on everything right away and so Libya. I'm opposed to what happened in Libya A through Z. Starting out with where was the constitutional authority, where was the Congress check-off on us going into Libya? Where is it in the Constitution that says that because we don't like a foreign leader that we should go in and topple that foreign leader? And who are the rebels in Libya? Have we not injected ourselves into a civil war in Libya? And aren't there five other countries in the Middle East right now that qualify for the same military intervention that we have implemented in Libya. Under the umbrella of a no-fly zone Saddam Hussein existed for 12 years. Under the umbrella of a no-fly zone did the atrocities in Bosnia occur. So at what point then do ground troops become committed in Libya? And I think we've already seen that. The unintended consequence of government and it's actions— We take out Saddam Hussein and there goes the check to Iran, which may in fact be a military

threat or a— which may in fact be a security threat to the United States. I don't believe that at this point it exists at all, but it's something that we should remain vigilant toward and will remain vigilant toward.

So it goes on and on and on.

I believe in free markets. In what I'm going to embark on, the discussion, the debate will be over government, government regulation and free markets, and I am always the one that's going to defend free markets. I think when free markets are talked about in terms of here are the root of all our evils, I would always point out that well in fact it's the reason— the fact that we don't have free markets is the result of the problems that we end up having. It's government and the unintended consequences of government and its actions, picking winners and losers, picking winners and losers when it comes to business, picking winners and losers when it comes to banking, and picking winners and losers when it comes to foreign governments. The unintended consequence of government. And having been Governor of New Mexico, and having vetoed 750 pieces of legislation, I always tried to put myself in the position of what going to be the unintended consequence of this legislation? Was it going to make a difference in anyone's life in New Mexico, and weren't we going to end up just spending a whole lot more money when it came to these issues.

So looking at health care in this country, believing in free markets, believing that the government could really provide solutions when it comes to health care by just eliminating impediments for health care entrepreneurs to enter into the health care space to deliver better products, better services at lower prices. And by the way health care in this country is about as far removed from free market as it possibly could be. But always in this process, in this upcoming debate, in this upcoming discussion which I relish I'm going to be the one that's going to take on the defense of the free market system and how if it were actually applied it would make a difference.

Immigration right now I think is a really hot button issue. It's a debate, it's a discussion that should take place. I happen to think that immigration is really a good thing. I think that this country is based on immigration. I view immigration as a job creator not a situation that takes away jobs. Right now because of our convoluted immigration policies, kids from abroad are coming and getting educated in the United States, but because of our convoluted immigration policies we're sending them back to their countries of origin where ultimately they're going to employ tens of millions of Indians as opposed to tens of millions of Americans with businesses that would have started up, developed and been nurtured here in this country.

I advocate elimination of the corporate income tax, recognizing that it is a double tax and by eliminating the corporate income tax that would create tens of millions of jobs in this country very simply; this would be the place to start up, build, nurture businesses that are currently taking place in other countries. This corporate income tax was something that started out as zero in this country. Get back to that and that's where we'll really see some job creation.

But immigration. Immigration should be about work, not welfare. We have issues in this country regarding welfare. Are immigrants coming across the border and taking entry level jobs from Americans? Absolutely not, because we as Americans, we can sit at home and collect a welfare check that's just a little bit less money or the same amount of money for doing nothing. So I think we should make it as easy as possible for immigrants that want to come into this country to get a work visa. I'm not talking about citizenship, I'm not talking about a green card, permanent non-resident status; I'm talking about a work visa which would entail a background check and a Social Security card so that applicable taxes would get paid.

Regarding the 11 million illegal immigrants that are here in this country right now, this is one of those

unintended consequences of government. Government has made it impossible for individuals that want to come into this country and work to get a work permit, so they know that if they get across the border, even illegally, that they can get a job because they have dozens of friends and family that live in the United States, and if they can get across the border even illegally, they'll get that same job. When Ronald Reagan set up an amnesty period in the '80s he coupled that with putting the government in charge of quotas. Don't get the government involved in quotas, make it easy to get a work visa, let business determine whether or not there's a need for the labor. If there's not immigrants will go back to their countries of origin; if there is jobs available then we'll see those jobs filled. So there needs to be a grace period where the 11 million illegal immigrants that are here in this country right now can get a legal work visa. Legal work visa, background check, Social Security card so that taxes would get paid. The notion of building a fence across two thousand miles of border, the notion of putting the National Guard arm in arm across two thousand miles of border in my opinion would be a whole lot of money spent with very little if any benefit whatsoever.

And then as I've said regarding drug policy, legalize marijuana. Legalize marijuana and arguably 75-percent of the border violence with Mexico goes away because that's the estimate of the drug cartel's activities that are engaged in the trade of marijuana. Twenty eight thousand deaths south of the border over the last four years. If we can't connect the dots between violence and prohibition, I don't know if we ever will be able to. These are disputes that are being played out with guns rather than in the courts.

Let's really take a new look at all of these issues, and that's now back to my announcement here, my announcement here that I am seeking the Republican nomination for president of the United States, and that I look forward to the debate and the discussion that will take place. And this is a great country. This is a terrific country. We went to the moon; we can solve these problems that we have right now, which first and foremost is our insolvency. But we need to do this, we need to do this now. I wouldn't be here right now if what I was saying was being said. It's not being said. And the idea here is to actually— what I'm posing here is to take part in a contest to be the spokesperson for the Republican Party. And if the Republican Party doesn't have options, then perhaps the Republican Party checks off a name that isn't all that representative of what Republicans might believe. I happen to think that I speak on behalf of the majority of Republicans, but that's a contest that I'm engaged in here right now and I just look forward to the debate and the discussion that will follow. And if I didn't say it earlier, I had a Mr. Smith Goes to Washington experience as Governor of New Mexico. I recognize that there are a lot of Mr. Smiths that go to Washington, but I was one of them, and I really felt like I made a difference, and I really feel like I could make a difference in this whole process.

Thank you very much.

Take some questions, comments, any insults that any of you have.

Q. Hi can you describe what your approach will be here in New Hampshire?

Describe my approach in New Hampshire. So I have been to about 34 states I think in the last 16 months and one of the places that I really enjoy more than anywhere is New Hampshire, which is really good because New Hampshire is really key in this whole process for me. I have to do and want to do really well in New Hampshire. So I'm going to spend a lot of time in New Hampshire where you can go from obscurity to prominence overnight with a good showing in New Hampshire. So I'm going to go out on a limb here and say that I won't be outworked when it comes to being in New Hampshire and talking to people.

Q. Is that why you chose New Hampshire to make your announcement?

Yes it is. It is. It's key to the equation. It's key to the equation to do well in the early primary states where again you can go from obscurity to being in a place where the lights don't shine any brighter. And I love retail politics. I love the fact that it's really a one on one discussion, debate. I love that fact in New Hampshire, and I saw this right off the bat. You know— what do you think about, what do you think about Mitt Romney for President? Well you know I've only talked to him a couple of times, I'm having him over for dinner on Thursday night, but I'm still undecided; I need to meet them all. I like that.

Q. What's different about your platform from Ron Paul's?

You know I'll let— I ran two campaigns for governor where I didn't mention my opponent in print, radio or television. The idea was to present ideas. The idea was to give people a choice as opposed to the lesser of two evils. So when it comes to me and comparing myself to others, I'm not the person to talk to. I'd let you draw those conclusions.

Q. If you bypass the exploratory committee, then how do you approach fundraising?

Bypass the exploratory committee? Well first of all, I'm committed to doing this so why do an exploratory committee if I'm committed to do this? So fundraising is obviously part of this. We intend to have a very aggressive online fundraising campaign that the website would have gone up I think just like 20 minutes ago, and it's GaryJohnson2012.

Q. Governor, one of the things I haven't heard you talk much about and it's very important to New Hampshire is gun control. Could you talk a little bit about where you stand on that issue?

Well when it comes to gun control I absolutely support the 2nd Amendment. As Governor of New Mexico back in 1995 concealed carry was something that was being hotly debated. I just saw that as an issue that would actually lead to less gun violence. That would be supporting concealed carry, so in New Mexico I would have been able to have signed legislation allowing concealed carry in New Mexico, believing that it would lead to less overall gun violence, and I think we've seen that played out, given that so many states have passed that and that it has come to pass.

Q. Donald Trump joked that Mitt Romney didn't have enough money. We've got Romney, Huntsman probably Trump, all multi-millionaires in this race. The president is talking about raising as much as a billion dollars for his re-election campaign. How can you compete in that market?

Well, good question. How can you compete in a market that takes so much money? We really believe that we're going to raise enough money to be competitive, and to go along with raising that amount of money, enough money to be competitive—and this would be in the Republican primary, obviously that's going to involve a lot of work, and it's going to involve some entrepreneurialship on our part to do things in a better, more effective way. So I have no complaints about the way, about the process. Having run for Governor of New Mexico, I just, I don't have any complaints. The rules are what they are, and I accept that and expect to do well in this process.

Q. How do you feel about unions?

How do I feel about unions? You know I just have one issue with unions. Just one, and that is that union has— Let's just use two hypothetical members of the union. That of those two hypothetical members of the

union, one is the worst worker that I've ever seen in my entire life, the other one is the best worker that I've ever seen in my entire life or encountered or been associated with. I can't reward the best, and I can't fire the worst. I have to accept them both as being equal, and I just don't think it works.

Thank you all very much.