

# Voting for a Third Party Candidate Is NOT a Wasted Vote

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Global Research, November 02, 2012

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Liberals and Conservatives Agree: Vote Third Party

*Preface: [Many Americans](#) are waking up to the fact that the Republican and Democratic candidates are incredibly similar. See [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#).*

*Many people are [starting to realize](#) that Obama and Romney are virtually indistinguishable on [war, jobs, freedoms](#) and [favoring fatcats instead of the little guy](#).*

*[Many of us](#) want a third party candidate to win ... but are afraid of "wasting our vote".*

Leading conservatives and liberals say that we should vote for a third party candidate.

[Judge Napolitano](#) explained today why voting for a third party is *not* wasting one's vote:

Can one morally vote for the lesser of two evils? In a word, no. A basic principle of Judeo-Christian teaching and of the natural law to which the country was married by the Declaration of Independence is that one may not knowingly do evil that good may come of it.

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So, is a vote for [a third party] or no vote at all wasted? I reject the idea that a principled vote is wasted. Your vote is yours, and so long as your vote is consistent with your conscience, it is impossible to waste your vote.

On the other hand, even a small step toward the free market and away from ... central economic planning would be at least a small improvement for every American's freedom. A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.

(Conservatives like [Jon Huntsman](#), [Sarah Palin](#) have spoken favorably of third parties as well.)

Liberal news commentator Lawrence O'Donnell urges us to vote for a third party candidate:

The liberal former chief aide to progressive Congressman Alan Grayson - [Matt Stoller](#) - agrees. After demonstrating how similar Obama and Romney are on most major issues, Stoller concludes:

I think it's worth voting for a third party candidate, and I'll explain why below.

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There are only five or six states that matter in this election; in the other 44 or 45, your vote on the presidential level doesn't matter. It is as decorative as a vote for an "American Idol contestant." So, unless you are in one of the few swing states that matters, a vote for Obama is simply an unabashed endorsement of his policies. But if you are in a swing state, then the question is, what should you do?

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The people themselves, what they believe and what they don't, can constrain political leaders. And under Obama, because there is now no one making the anti-torture argument, Americans have become [more tolerant of torture, drones, war and authoritarianism in general](#). The case against Obama is that the people themselves will be better citizens under a Romney administration, distrusting him and placing constraints on his behavior the way they won't on Obama. As a candidate, Obama promised a whole slew of civil liberties protections, lying the whole time. Obama has successfully organized the left part of the Democratic Party into a force that had rhetorically opposed war and civil liberties violations, but now cheerleads a weakened America .... We must fight this thuggish political culture Bush popularized, and Obama solidified in place.

But can a third-party candidate win? No. So what is the point of voting at all, or voting for a third-party candidate? My answer is that this election is, first and foremost, practice for crisis moments. Elections are just one small part of how social justice change can happen. The best moment for change is actually a crisis, where there is actually policy leverage. ... Saying no to evil in 2012 will help us understand who is willing to say no to evil when it really matters. And when you have power during a crisis, there's no end to the amount of good you can do.

How do we drive large-scale change during moments of crisis? How do we use this election to do so? Well, voting third party or even just honestly portraying Obama's policy architecture is a good way to identify to ourselves and each other who actually has the integrity to not cave to bullying.... We need to put ourselves into the position to be able to run the government.

After all, if a political revolution came tomorrow, could those who believe in social justice and climate change actually govern?

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[If we had had more courage, we could have] reorganized our politics. Instead the oligarchs took control, because we weren't willing to face them down when we needed to show courage. So now we have the worst of all worlds, an inevitably worse crisis and an even more authoritarian structure of governance.

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The reason to advocate for a third-party candidate is to build the civic muscles willing to say no to the establishment in a crisis moment we all know is coming. Right now, the liberal establishment is teaching its people that letting malevolent political elites do what they want is not only the right path, it is the only path. Anything other than that is dubbed an affront to common decency. Just telling the truth is considered beyond rude.

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We can do this. And the moments to let us make the changes we need are coming. There is endless good we can do, if enough of us are willing to show the courage that exists within every human being instead of the malevolence and desire for conformity that also exists within every heart.

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Systems that can't go on, don't. The political elites, as much as they kick the can down the road, know this. The question we need to ask ourselves is, do we?

## Why I'm Voting for Gary Johnson

One of the main reasons to vote for a third party candidate is that the broken two-party system will never change unless third parties get more backing.

If 5% of the American people vote for a third party candidate, that candidate will receive government matching funds, which will give them a better shot at competing.

Moreover, a showing of 5% or more would create buzz and start a self-fulfilling dynamic of lending credibility and a sense of possibility for a third party.

But do any third party candidates have a chance of getting 5% of the vote?

Yes ... Gary Johnson.

[Judge Napolitano](#) endorses Gary Johnson. [Jesse Ventura](#) endorsed Johnson.

Even Ron Paul [hinted](#) that he would vote for Johnson. And in 2010, Paul said that if he didn't run in 2012, he would [endorse Johnson](#).

[A bunch of other people](#) have endorsed Johnson as well. And at least some newspapers – such as the [Chattanooga Free Press](#) – have endorsed Johnson.

In fact, polls show that Johnson might reach 5%. A September [CNN/ORC International poll](#) showed that 3% of likely voters and 4% of registered voters say they'd vote for Johnson. A Reason-Rupe poll the same month showed Johnson raking in [6%](#) of likely voters.

Those polls were taken before Ron Paul convinced his supporters that he's out of the race, and before he virtually endorsed Johnson.

Moreover – since the polls were taken – Johnson has gotten on the ballot in 48 states ... and won the right for write-in votes for Johnson to be counted in the remaining 2.

Ron Paul supporters can, of course, write in Paul on the ballot. But a write-in vote for Paul will [not be counted in most states](#).

And since he is not affiliated with any party at this point – and since even he will likely *himself* vote for Johnson – a vote for Paul will not help any third party. No wonder many diehard Paul fans are announcing that [they're going with Johnson](#).

As such, I'm voting for Gary Johnson.

*Postscript: Johnson is not perfect, but he is solid on [issues of civil rights, liberty, peace and](#)*

[\*fiscal responsibility.\*](#)

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