

RFK Jr Kennedy, Another Slimy Creature of the Swamp

Description

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[The Wall Street Journal](#) reports that [Robert F. Kennedy Jr.](#) has picked [Nicole Shanahan](#), a California-based attorney who was previously married to Google co-founder [Sergey Brin](#), as his running mate for his long-shot presidential bid, according to people familiar with the decision.

Shanahan, 38, also runs a foundation focused on reproductive rights, criminal justice and the environment.

Before backing Kennedy's independent bid, Shanahan had previously been a donor to Democratic campaigns, including supporting Joe Biden's election in 2020.

Kennedy was slated to announce his choice Tuesday in Oakland, Calif., where Shanahan grew up.



Shanahan, a political novice, was **thrust into the spotlight over her public split with Brin amid a brief alleged affair she had with [Elon Musk](#) in 2021 that ruptured the billionaires' long friendship**, [The Wall Street Journal](#) reported.

After the article published, Musk denied the allegations and Shanahan later followed suit.

It isn't clear yet whether Shanahan plans to assist by tapping into her own wealth.

The Kennedy campaign declined to comment.

Shanahan didn't respond to requests for comment.

Ahead of the announcement, Kennedy's campaign manager confirmed on X that Shanahan was under consideration, along with several others including New York Jets quarterback Aaron Rodgers and Mike Rowe, host of Discovery Channel's Dirty Jobs.

Meanwhile, **lured by the promise of turnkey ballot access across the country, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr is seriously considering a run to win the Libertarian Party presidential nomination.**

However, his stance on the Israel-Gaza war and other issues could make his candidacy a tough sell with non-interventionist libertarians.

Navigating the varied and complex patchwork of state ballot-access qualifying rules is one of the most grueling and expensive impediments to anyone seeking to challenge America's two-party duopoly — to say nothing of the legal challenges filed by the Republican and Democratic parties along the way. So far, reports [Politico](#), **Kennedy's backers say they've cleared the key hurdles in just eight states.** Meanwhile, it's already pretty much a given that **the Libertarian Party will be on the ballot in all 50.** The top ticket will be selected by delegates at the party's [national convention](#) in Washington DC over Memorial Day weekend. Selected by state conventions, those **delegates are free to vote for whomever they like at the national convention.**



[Kennedy spoke at the the Free State Project's annual "PorcFest" last summer \(Ryan David Brown for New York Times\)](#)

Kennedy's flirtation with Libertarian Party members has been simmering since last year, and has included appearances on libertarian podcasts and an interview with *Reason* magazine. His most direct outreach came with a **February appearance at the party's California state convention**, which has been credited for helping set a new California Libertarian convention [attendance record](#).

"I've always been aligned with libertarians on most issues," Kennedy told *Reason* last summer. **"I mean, there's tweaks that I have."**

Some of those tweaks are doozies. For example, Kennedy said **if Congress passed a so-called assault weapon ban, "I would sign it."** (On the other hand, he also [said](#), "Anybody who tells you that they're going to be able to reduce gun violence through gun control at this point, I don't think is being realistic.") He's also called for a \$15 national minimum wage, more free childcare, and abolishing interest on all federal student loans

However, **it's Kennedy's statements on Israel-Palestine that seem to have caused the most damage to his prospects** with staunchly non-interventionist libertarians — which is to say, most libertarians — who oppose entangling alliances, foreign aid, and US-enabled warfare.

Kennedy has called for the United States to [arm](#) the "[moral nation](#)" of Israel, has expressed skepticism about a ceasefire in Gaza, and said "[the Palestinian people are arguably the most pampered people](#) by international aid organizations in the world." Some libertarians are also put off by Kennedy's embrace of controversial Israel advocate Shmuley Boteach.

In December, one of Kennedy's campaign staffers resigned, [criticizing](#) him for, among other things, saying that **collective punishment in Gaza is "ok"** because "for ten years we did collective punishment of Iraq."

On the other side of the ledger, Kennedy's opposition to Covid vaccine mandates resonated with libertarians. He's also pushed for more border security, **accused the government of using Ukraine as a pawn to weaken Russia,** and promised to ["unwind" the US empire](#).

RFK Jr's few overlaps with libertarian philosophy aren't likely to be enough, nor are arguments that Kennedy's name recognition would result in higher national vote counts for the party and thus easier ballot access going forward.

That's because, in 2022, **the Libertarian Party was taken over by members of the [Mises Caucus](#)**, a group that counts Ron Paul, Friedrich Hayek, Murray Rothbard and Ludwig von Mises among its chief philosophical influencers.



[Austrian School economist Ludwig von Mises \(Mises Institute\)](#)

In February, the Mises Caucus issued a [statement](#) flatly refuting any suggestion that it was open to considering Kennedy as a presidential candidate:

“We firmly oppose any strategy that would ‘rent out’ our party’s place on any state’s ballot to RFK, or indeed any candidate who has so many disqualifying deviations from the essential principles of libertarianism.”

The group also reiterated its endorsement of [Michael Rectenwald](#) for president and [Clint Russell](#) for vice president. Meanwhile, in a fiery but mostly peaceful February [tweet](#), author, podcaster and [Libertarian Institute](#) director Scott Horton urged party members to prevent Kennedy from become the Libertarian Party’s standard-bearer:

“Jeffrey Epstein’s blood-guzzling friend RFK Jr. must be stopped. Can you imagine OUR candidate out their shilling for Israel in the middle of a massive ethnic cleansing campaign? Our party back in the hands of those who want to fight Russia and China over not being trans enough?

The LP in the hands of libertarians can be the one of the most effective vehicles we have for obstructing the state and spreading the message of liberty. Let’s not blow it now after we’ve already won.”

Others have expressed their own opposition...