



## Jonathan Johnson, Utah GOP Convention & Announcement Speech

August 15, 2015

It is great to be part of this convention. And it is great to be a Republican.

Overstock.com and I are proud of the commitment we've made, both in time and resources, that have helped many good conservative candidates and our party achieve significant victories.

That said, I know it is **you** who make our party great. And while many in the press and the downtown elite disparage you, our neighborhood town hall meetings, and the convention system, you are not political pawns. You are the active and committed political leaders of our state. Thank you for all you do!

There is a saying: "Leadership is what leadership does." Leadership isn't about talking or about holding a position – it's about doing. As my friend Senator Mike Lee frequently says, "It's time for us to stop just talking about Ronald Reagan and start acting like him!"

I can tell you, I know that a dangerous day in the life of an organization – or a state – is the day it gets ranked number one in something, the day it is praised, the day it begins to believe its own press.

It's dangerous because it's so easy to get lulled into complacency and become content to live off of the accolades of the past, remembering yesterday instead of boldly creating a better tomorrow.

You see, Utah will not lead the nation tomorrow because it was a great place to do business last year. Leadership is always about the future.

My experience has convinced me that leadership is important in any endeavor ... but it is **particularly** vital in public service.

Remember, our primary responsibility as a party is to elect – or hire – great leaders. The quality of the leaders we hire determines the quality of our government. The right kind of government is one that gets out of the way, so individuals, families and communities can thrive.

Leadership matters. And with the challenges we will face in the coming years it matters now more than ever before.

I've found that effective leadership is not just managing. Leading isn't just cheerleading or high approval ratings.

Leadership isn't giving lip service to states' rights and looking to Washington for solutions.

No, leadership is defined by performance, not position. Leadership takes good and makes it great. I repeat: leadership is what leadership does.

My name is Jonathan Johnson and I am ready to lead the State of Utah. I'm making it official – I want to be your next Governor.

During the months ahead I will do what I've been doing this past year – traveling the state – reaching out to you and your neighbors – listening to your concerns and your ideas about the future of our families, our neighborhoods and communities. I will also be sharing my ideas for how we can take Utah from good to great.

Now, we have a governor who will have served for seven and a half years. I know he wants to keep that job for a third term.

Many of you will be the delegates at next Spring's nominating convention. You will need to make a decision: Who will you trust to lead? Who will you **hire** to be our party's nominee for governor?

I ask you to spend the next several months getting to know me. Put me through a rigorous interview process. I am confident you will see that my candidacy represents the difference between having someone who leads and someone who merely manages.

True leaders create opportunities for meaningful discussion and debate.

I propose a plan to help you evaluate me and our current governor: Let's call for a series of debates (job interviews for the next leader of the state, if you will) – and let's begin in October. Let's hold debates early, often and throughout the state – before the presidential election gets any louder and before the legislative session. This will allow all Utahns to learn how he and I differ and understand our leadership strengths, styles and priorities.

Behind me on the screen is a number. If you think holding debates is a good idea, take out your phone and text 'Debate Yes' to that number. If you don't, text 'Debate No.'

Frankly, every Utahn deserves a side-by-side, straightforward discussion from the candidates on the critical issues Utah faces.

For example:

1. Let's debate how we *actually* improve education. Will we continue to allow the federal government to **manage** local education through *Common Core*? Or will we **lead** by empowering parents and local teachers with education dollars and decisions?
2. Let's debate how we preserve states' rights. Will we continue to allow the federal government to **manage** our lands? Or will we **lead** the western states by reclaiming our lands from the federal government?
3. Let's debate how we can be fiscally self-reliant. Will we continue to **manage** Utah's budget with \$4 billion (30% of the budget) coming from Washington? Or will we proactively **lead** and prepare for what happens when D.C. runs out of money?
4. Let's debate how we prepare for growth. Will we continue to **manage** the future through polls? Or will we actively **lead** and develop a sustainable, long-term water and clean air plan without job-killing regulations?

These are only four of many issues we should discuss during the hiring process for Utah's next leader.

Again, if you think early and frequent debates are a good idea, text 'Debate Yes' to the number on the screen. If you don't, text 'Debate No.'

Utah is a great state. But we can be better.

I am ready to lead Utah. Hire me as your next governor – because it's time for us to act like Ronald Reagan, paint with bold colors and hire a leader who has a bigger vision of a brighter future for the State of Utah.

Join me on this journey! Together we will make this vision a reality ... because that is what leaders do!