GOP PAYS THE PRICE FOR AUTHORITARIANISM–WIL L THEY RESPOND?

As a number of people—particularly conservatives—started to realize last night, Gary Johnson may have played spoiler for Mitt Romney in FL. Here are the current results from FL:

> Mitt: 4,096,439
>
> Obama: 4,143,534

Difference: 47,095

> Johnson: 43,673

Johnson's totals wouldn't quite have been enough to eliminate the current margin, but (assuming Johnson drew mostly from Mitt voters), it made a big difference.

Assuming once FL gets around to finalizing their count Obama wins this thing, Mitt will have lost, in part, because of Johnson's success.

The Nader effect, come home to roost for the GOP.

So in addition to being nicer to non-Cuban Latinos and African Americans, to win FL, Mitt presumably would have had to be more attractive to libertarians. While I doubt Mitt Romney was ever going to come out for pot legalization, he also has a bunch of scary authoritarian advisors—the likes of Cofer Black—who might be unappealing to libertarian minded Republicans.

Mind you, I suspect the GOP will respond to such a scenario (if it does come about) in much the same way as the Democrats did after 2000: with a lot of angry recriminations but no thought about being more responsive to the constituency that

ditched the party. Not only has the GOP come to love them some big government authoritarianism, but they’re going to have a hard enough time trying to make the party less racist.

Still, Johnson’s success in FL may provide some pressure for both parties to take civil liberties more seriously.