



## **What does Independent Voting stand for?**

We're a national strategy, communications, and organizing center working to connect and empower the 43% of Americans who identify themselves as independents. Our mission is to develop a movement of independent voters for progressive post-partisan reform of the American political process. Our focus is two fold. 1) Make independent voters visible -- seen, heard, reported on, inquired about, studied and reacted to and 2) put on display that independents are becoming organized -- talking to one another, the media and the public. What are we talking about? Who independents are, why so many people are becoming independent, what are the barriers independents face in the political process, what moves are they making to structurally reform the process so all voters stand on a level playing field not tilted by partisan concerns. How do we do this? We take our political independence into every aspect of civic life. No activity aimed at making independents more visible or displaying that we are becoming organized is too small. It's the cumulative effect of our efforts that is building our movement and putting independents on the map.

## **What are people becoming a part of when they join Independent Voting?**

We were formed in 1994 and over the last 20 years have built the largest organization of independents in the country. We have affiliates in 40 states and function as an organizing hub and strategy center for leaders across the country -- from grassroots activists who are representing the concerns of independents locally, to former elected officials who have left one or the other party in disgust because they can't do their job or reform the process from within the parties. We are not building a third party. We are leading a movement for structural political reforms that open up the process and organizing independents and reform-minded Americans from the bottom up to make that happen. Membership connects you to a national grassroots network working on these critical issues in every state in the country and strengthens our ability to force the process open.



## Assessment Worksheet

1. What barriers to participation do independents face in your state? (For example, are they allowed to register as independents? Vote in primaries? Split their ticket? Access voter lists through the Secretary of State? Access the ballot as a candidate?)

2. What are independent voters called officially in your state?

3. How many voters are there in your state?

4. What is the breakdown of the voter enrollment?

Democrats	Republicans	Independents	Libertarian	Green	Other

5. Total of all independents (unaffiliated plus minor party registrants)

6. What percentage of the electorate are independents? (total number of all independents divided by the total number of enrolled voters)

7. Does your state have Initiative & Referendum?

8. Have there been any efforts in your state to open the primaries or establish nonpartisan elections? If so, describe.

9. Have there been any efforts at re-districting reform? If so, describe.

10. Are voter lists for independents available for free or purchase?

11. How big is Independent Voting's database for your state?

12. How many independents do you know?

Name	City	Occupation	Organizational Affiliations

Additional Notes:



## Initial Steps for Organizing

1. **Do a conference call with independents in your state and a national representative from Independent Voting.** Pick a date and time. We'll supply the phone number and access code and a national representative! Request a call list and we will supply you with names and contact info for independents in your state as well as a phone "script" to invite them on your conference call. Before the conference call, we'll do a planning call to look at who's expected to come on and design the presentation.
2. **Pick a name.** Adding "independent" into the name helps link you to the national organization. Here are some samples:
  - MIST - Missouri Independents Stand Together
  - ULIV - Utah League of Independent Voters
  - NHIV - New Hampshire Independent Voters
  - PI - Pennsylvania Independents
  - New York City Independence Clubs
  - MACOIV - Massachusetts Coalition of Independent Voters
  - IVON – Independent Voters of Nevada
3. **Publicize.** Write and distribute a press release about the founding of your organization or do a Letter to the Editor campaign. Start a Facebook page. Send in a draft and we'll polish it and distribute it statewide. For letters to the editor, request a template and have members customize it in their voice. When they're happy with the final version, we'll distribute it for them.
4. **Join the national conference call.** Bring new members on a national conference call. National conference calls are a great way to introduce your members to Jackie Salit who gives in-depth political briefings on the state of the independent movement five to six times a year. The calls are recorded so members who miss the live call can listen later.
5. **Membership.** Joining Independent Voting is easy and connects new members to a national network that is working on the issue of opening up the political process all over the country. Membership is a one-time \$10 donation.



## Member Benefits

- **The Hub.** We write and distribute an online newsletter called *The Hub*. It provides a synopsis of what activists in our network are doing around the country and contains links to media coverage of their work. It also profiles a new leader we've met in each edition. Comes out twice a month.
- **National Conference Calls.** We hold five to six national conference calls a year with our President, Jackie Salit, where she gives high level political briefings on the state of our movement and new developments taking place within it. Typically these calls have 150-200 people on from around the country. Special guests have included independent Mayor Mike Bloomberg and Congressman John Delaney, author of the Open Our Democracy Act.
- **Book Club.** We have a very unique book club called Politics for the People which is accessible, interactive and unprecedented. You participate from home; we have a very active blog where artistic projects and essays on the readings are shared and the signature highlight of each book club selection is an intimate in-depth conversation by conference call between book club members and the author. Three of our last five authors were Pulitzer Prize winners.
- **Local and Regional Events.** Members get access to special state-based and regional strategy sessions for campaigns in your area and invitations to local meetings and conference calls.
- **Spokesperson Trainings.** We provide spokesperson trainings and ongoing support to help independents develop their voice and ability to speak effectively about issues of concern to independents. These take place quarterly via national conference call and are led by the Director of Communications Sarah Lyons.
- **Reports.** A periodic President's report from Jackie Salit summarizing her thoughts on where our movement stands.