



January 12, 2017

Who You'll Meet at the National Conference of Independents, March 18, 2017

175 independents from 29 states have registered to date for the 9th biennial National Conference of Independents to be held March 18th in New York City. We expect to fill the 380 seat venue to capacity and *The Hub* will be introducing you in the weeks to come to some of the people you will meet there.

Register for the conference today

"After attending my first biennial National Conference of Independents in NYC in 2015, I've been looking forward to returning in 2017! I'm passionate about electoral reform and other systemic reforms that will help us shift -- in thoughtful, productive ways -- the balance of power from the parties and the powers that be, to the people.

I'd love to see us get out of traditional, ideological, partisan, political ways of thinking, and create a system that gives everyone a meaningful voice and allows us to solve pressing issues in new, collaborative and better ways."

"The Conference is an invaluable opportunity to interact with activists from across the country who share this passion. Though we all come from diverse backgrounds and experiences, I feel invigorated, and completely at ease and at home with this group of people. The conference is well-planned, well-



organized, and well-executed - definitely worthwhile. Now is our time to take the next step in helping a restless, concerned, alienated, divided America channel its energy in positive, unifying ways."

Tiani X. Coleman, President, **New Hampshire Independent Voters**

**From her Letter of Invitation:
Jackie Salit, IndependentVoting.org President**

"Historically, our national conferences have provided a context for independent activists to connect with one another. We have developed tactics and strategies for transferring power from the establishment-most especially the parties-to the people. We have looked at ways to grow our movement and train our leaders. We have educated ourselves about the state of our movement. We will do all of that and more in March...I hope you will join me in these important political conversations."

Click here to read Salit's letter of invitation.

Please check out our **special event site** which is a clearinghouse for information on the conference. You will find registration information, photos and videos from past conferences, and information about the conference itself.



**Post-presidential inauguration and run-up to our
National Conference of Independents**

Sunday, January 29th, 2017 4pm ET

Click here to register for the call

**Have a question that you'd like Jackie Salit to address?
Send to: national@independentvoting.org**

**Independent Voters of Connecticut Challenge
Partisan Control of Elections**

**Gwen Samuel, parent leader and founder of
Independent Voters of Connecticut, has a**

message to Connecticut voters:

Happy New Year everyone! The newly formed **Independent Voters of Connecticut** is kicking off the new year with a bang ! We have launched **Let Connecticut Vote** , a campaign designed to get an Open Primaries bill introduced by Connecticut lawmakers.

As a mom and an active unaffiliated voter, I value my constitutional right to vote. Thus, I firmly believe all states must have open primaries to ensure every registered voter has the legal right to participate in every aspect of the voting process.



Gwen Samuel receiving an Anti-Corruption Award from Dr. Lenora Fulani

Semi and closed primaries can be likened to 20th century literacy tests that required "certain" Americans to be able to read and write before they could vote or the payment of a poll tax as a prerequisite to register to vote, which often disenfranchised communities of color.

Read Gwen's full statement here and if you're in Connecticut, contact Gwen at gwendolynsamuel@gmail.com to find out how you can participate in this important campaign.



Profiles in Independence:

Mazen Shteivi, Lafayette, IN

Mazen Shteivi is a founder of the newly formed **Independent Voices of Indiana**. Here is his story:

I am the oldest of my family with a younger brother and sister, born to parents who immigrated to America from a small village in Alfuhais, Jordan. We were born and raised in Cincinnati, Ohio. Growing up I didn't have many opportunities. We lived in a rough area with parents who worked hard to give us a good life but who didn't have much. My dad came to America with nothing but a few dollars; but after starting as a cook at a Gold Star Chili, and years of toil, he managed to save enough to start a small business and succeed. My mom had his back through their whole journey. I saw how hard they worked and knew that if I did the same, if I kept my head strong and played it smart, I'd be able to make something of myself. 26 years later as I look back, I'm proud of what I did. I graduated high school and went straight to the University of Cincinnati in pursuit of a degree in Mechanical Engineering; something I've always wanted. I spent the next five years studying and working all kinds of jobs to find a way to pay for it. Finally, after graduating, I was offered a job in Lafayette, Indiana and decided to pack my things and see where the road took me. I couldn't be happier with my decision. The town has been more than welcoming and I have met some really incredible people.



Having never lived on my own, and with a 9 to 5 job I suddenly had free time I never thought I'd have. Having all this time I felt like the best and most valuable thing I could do with it was learn. I wanted to understand more about the world: science, philosophy, music, poetry, you name it. Through this time with my head buried in books and articles I found that there are so many issues we're facing and so many questions that we don't have the answers to. I watched this last election unfold and just couldn't understand why things were so bad. It was surreal when watching the speed at which people condemned one another. It seemed that we were only surrounded by the most extreme ideas and voices. The voices of reason; of rationality and kindness were silent.

Questions of no importance were being fought over as if just to win and make the other person look bad as opposed to reaching anything resembling agreement. Our democracy is based on the idea of consensus and if we don't talk to each other we can't achieve anything. This is why I decided that I will take part and do my duty for the country that has done so much for me and my family. It's my hope that through my efforts and the efforts of those who will stand with me, that we can affect change for the better.

If you are in Indiana, contact Mazen at shteiwme@gmail.com.

In the News

- Pat Bergeron, one of the founders of the ALIV (Alliance of Louisiana Independent Voters) - along with Bill Bryan, Esq. - authored this piece for *The Hill* - "[Louisiana Has the Prescription for a Fractured Political System, More Independents.](#)"
- "[A Threat to US Democracy: Political Dysfunction](#)," by Eduardo Porter (*NY Times*).
- Maine independent's Joe Pickering authored "[Make Primaries Open](#)," (*Bangor Daily News*)
- Editorial by Joe Kirby "[2016 Election Taught SD citizens a Lot](#)" (*Daily Republic*).
- Independent Ohio activist Carol McFall had [this letter to the editor about Congressional Redistricting reform](#) printed in *The Canton Repository*.

Politics For the People Current Selection

Terrible Virtue, by Ellen Feldman Fictional Look at the Life of Margaret Sanger, the founder of Planned Parenthood

Check out our Reader's Forum on [the Politics for the People blog](#).

P4P member Dr. Susan Massad reviews *Terrible Virtue*:

"*Terrible Virtue* is an extraordinarily apt title for this fictional account of the life of Margaret Sanger, rebel, feminist, founder of Planned Parenthood, and crusader for the right for all women to access effective birth control. Thru diverse narrative voices, of Sanger's children, her lovers, her sister and husband, the author, Ellen Feldman, gives us a way into the life of this very historically conflicted character. Margaret Sanger was a complicated and difficult woman. Called by some, even today, a eugenicist, racist, and quack. And, for the many women whose cause she championed, Sanger was a hero.

I found myself alternately applauding her and judging her...."

[Dr. Massad's full post here.](#)



Politics for the People Conference Call Sunday, January 23 7pm ET

With Ellen Feldman

Call In Number: 641-715-3605

Access code 767775#

Are you a member of IndependentVoting.org?

We are the grassroots-fueled movement that believes if we're going to get forward-looking policies and develop our country, then we have to change the way our political process functions. Your membership connects you to a national grassroots network working on these critical issues in every state of the country and strengthens our ability to force the process open.

Membership is a one-time \$10 fee (or you can become a sponsor for \$100 which includes membership and a \$90 donation).

Click here to join today!

And help expand additional outreach on social media by making a donation to our advertising campaign. Every \$100 you give allows us to engage 4,500 people with our message on Facebook. **Please Donate here.** Thanks for your generous support!

Gwen Mandell
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Give us a call today!

gmandell@independentvoting.org

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