



October 22, 2015

Organizing Initiative Launched in Arizona

Cathy Stewart, Vice President of National Development for **IndependentVoting.org**, was in Arizona this week to kick off an organizing initiative to expand **Independent Voters for Arizona** statewide.

Tim Castro, a seasoned campaign professional, has come on board to run the expansion operation. Cathy and Tim launched the project in Phoenix and

welcomed **Amanda Melcher** to the team, who will be running a phone bank to indies. Tim and Independent Voters for Arizona leaders **Kim Ames-Wright** in Prescott; **Jim Morrison** in Tucson; and **Richard Sinclair** in Scottsdale are building support for the **Open Our Democracy** campaign.



From R to L: Independent Voters for Arizona State Leader Kim Ames-Wright; Janell Wood; Open Primaries AZ Campaign Director Patrick McWhortor; Paul Johnson; Thomas Tull; Independent Voters for Arizona State Leader Jim Morrison; Tim Castro; IndependentVoting State Coordinator, Open Our Democracy Campaign; Scottsdale City Councilmember Kathy Littlefield; and Former Councilmember Bob Littlefield

On Saturday, IndependentVoting.org and Open Primaries hosted a meeting for Independent Voters for Arizona with **Paul Johnson**, former Phoenix mayor and leader of the effort to bring nonpartisan primary reform to Arizona. Paul briefed participants on the growing reform coalition in the state. At the meeting, Tim presented the results of the outreach that is underway.

To date:

- 33,433 Arizonian independents have **signed** letters to their congressional representative urging action to support HR2655, Rep. Delaney's Open Our Democracy bill.
- 1,660 of these independents have expressed interest in **volunteering**.
- Within days of launching the phone engagement program, 100 conversations with independents were conducted with these results:



The Power of the Postcard

The humble postcard-turned-powerful-organizing-tool was the subject of the last Spokesperson Training with Sarah Lyons.

"With the Open Our Democracy postcard as your prop," said Lyons "tell someone you are lobbying Congress and could use their help. That's a sure fire way to create an audience for whatever it is you say next and before you know it, a conversation has begun."



Order Postcards

Here's how Cynthia Carpathios, founder of Independent Ohio and Midwest regional leader put it:

"I have been trying to get a meeting with my Congressperson and -- not having met with much success yet -- I have looked at the postcards as a form of leverage. But with hyperpartisan districting and my local area chopped up into strangely shaped bits, it has been a challenge for me to find significant numbers of people who live in my district to sign and send postcards to my Congressperson. I was feeling stuck. After the recent Spokesperson Training call, I started to re-examine my relationship to the campaign. Rather than thinking of it primarily as a means to get to my Congressperson, I am now relating to it as a way to start political conversations with people, to make connections and to build our independent movement. I am putting that first and am considering **what I can do with the postcards** as relevant, but secondary."

Steve Hough, spokesperson for Florida Fair & Open Primaries and leader in Panama City, Florida has a meeting with Rep. Gwen Graham in the works. "I mailed the first 10 postcards today. I got 13 more signed this morning in less than an hour. I will continue to do this every few days, until I get word of a scheduled appointment. If she's willing to support the bill, I'm going to ask Congresswoman Graham to appear with me on our local NPR program *Rap Line*."

And from Randy Miller, founder of ULIV (Utah League of Independent Voters):

"I thought I was doing pretty good getting 30 or so cards returned in the last month until I saw **Evelyn Dougherty** gathered 30 in a few hours in Massachusetts! I sent a few cards to Congressman Rob Bishop (Utah 1st District) at his Washington DC office only to find out that very little mail sent to DC actually winds up being delivered for security reasons. So I looked up his Utah office address, and guess what? I work in the same building in Ogden, Utah! So I have been trying to create a steady stream of cards coming into his office for the last two weeks. I have mailed one a day through the post office, personally hand delivered one or two a day, and enlisted Jared Hoffman in the local area to deliver some cards in person from his personal network. We will be asking Congressman Bishop for a meeting soon. Miller and team are now taking to the movie lines to ask moviegoers to sign a postcard.

Speaking of Dougherty and the **Massachusetts Coalition of Independent Voters** team, after sending their first 60 postcards to Rep. Michael Capuano (7th CD) along with a meeting request, they are now heading to the district of Rep. Stephen Lynch (8th CD) to gather support for the **Open Our Democracy** campaign.

Mother Hillary and Uncle Bernie: A Theatrical Review by Jackie Salit

IndependentVoting.org President Jackie Salit comments on the recent Democratic Party Presidential Debate in her new opinion piece in *The Huffington Post*.

"The main action revolves around Mother and Uncle, as it is their struggle which determines the family's fortunes. He is a crusader against the unstoppable greed of capitalism. He is passionate and angry for the working man and for the planet. But, ever the nimble triangulator, she is, too. She agrees with Uncle Bernie, to a point. 'We have to save capitalism from itself!' she proclaims. Right at this moment, giving in to my playwright side, I prayed that Bernie would deliver this line:



'No, Hillary, we have to save the Democratic Party from itself!' Sadly, he didn't."

Read the complete opinion piece here.

A Profile in Independence:

Tim Castro, Phoenix, AZ

Welcome to Tim Castro, the new Arizona Campaign Coordinator for IndependentVoting.org's Open Our Democracy Campaign. Tim brings a wealth of political and community leadership skills to our efforts in Arizona. Tim has worked for several local campaigns, volunteers on diverse group boards, (he is even an official Girl Scout of America, as he had to take the Girl Scout Oath to serve on their board!) and has experience in the non-profit sector working with volunteers. Tim joins IndependentVoting.org with a passion to make voting in Arizona open to everyone. *"I am very excited to work with independent leaders like Jim Morrison, Kim Wright and Richard Sinclair as we build Independent Voters for Arizona to create an opportunity to bring all the voices to the voting booth."*



Tim Castro

Statement by Independent Voters of Nevada ("IVON") founder Catana Barnes on Democratic Party Presidential Debate in Las Vegas

"There was a disconnect in last night's debate that independents couldn't help be stung by. The debate took place in Nevada, a state that holds presidential caucuses that are closed to independent voters, even though we are 27% of the electorate here. Bernie Sanders says millions have to rise up, but he won't call for our inclusion. Hillary Clinton says she is a progressive who gets things done, but the partisan structure of elections and Congress make it impossible. What's her plan for reform?"



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Next debate? Let's find a moderator who is at least willing to observe that two of the five candidates on the stage are or were independents. And let's make sure the candidates have to share their view on why so many in our country -- 45% -- don't align with any political party and what they plan to do to fix the system in order to include us."

In the News

Tiani Coleman's distinction as a New York City Independence Clubs Anti-Corruption awardee received press coverage in her local New Hampshire paper, *The Amherst Patch*. The Chair of **New Hampshire Independent Voters** then received a personal letter from **U.S. Senator Kelly Ayotte** congratulating her on her award. She said, *"I am thrilled to see you recognized for your efforts to gain equal voting rights for independent and unaffiliated voters. This is a wonderful honor, and you have made all of us here in New Hampshire proud. Thank you for your leadership and advocacy work on the important issue of voter rights. I am grateful for your contributions and wish you all of the best for continued success."*

And hot off the press - Tiani's opinion piece, "**My Turn: Nonpartisan Primaries Put Power in the Hands of the People**," is featured in *The Concord Monitor*.

John Opdycke, President of **Open Primaries** appeared on "**The Open Mind**" (PBS) with host Alexander Heffner in a segment called "Country Before Party." *"I'm not trying to get people to be dissatisfied or angry with the system,"* said Opdycke. *"That's already there. Our movement is suggesting that the way we're going to impact on that is not by getting this person elected or that person elected or the right person elected. It's by fundamentally changing how we elect people in this country."*

Arizona Horizons' host Ted Simons welcomed **Open Primaries Arizona** Campaign Director **Patrick McWhortor** and John Opdycke to discuss nonpartisan election models operating in CA and Nebraska as well as prospects of reform for Arizona.

"What if the Parties Didn't Run Primaries?" in *The Atlantic* magazine reviews nonpartisan primary systems used in California and Nebraska and quotes John Opdycke of Open Primaries.

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