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**The Hub**

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## JOIN THE OPEN OUR DEMOCRACY CAMPAIGN

Rep. John Delaney was interviewed by Jackie Salit July 15 on her national conference call about the **Open Our Democracy Act**.

The bill, which was reintroduced in June by Delaney does three things: calls for top two nonpartisan primaries for U.S. House and Senate, makes Election Day a national holiday and sets up a commission to assess the practice of gerrymandering and develop a less partisan redistricting process.



In the interview, Salit asked Delaney to respond to the reluctance of traditional reformers and good government groups to support nonpartisan primaries.

*"The problem we have is so many people are vested with the current system. I really believe this has to be a grassroots movement," Delaney said, "because I think if you go to normal Americans, average everyday Americans, people who are not overly engaged and dependent on the political process for their livelihood or how they fill their time, if you go to them and talk about these issues, it's really almost unassailable to them. They can't even begin to imagine why what we're talking about here is not just common sense."*

[Listen to the interview here.](#)

[Read the IVN story about the conference call here.](#)

Salit told Delaney "We're going to be working hard to popularize this bill and these issues and to give you the kind of grassroots support that you need so that when you talk to your colleagues and when we all talk to the presidential candidates, which we will, that we'll be in a position to show that there really is such a strong and fervent movement around this country to fix what's structurally wrong with our political process and make our democracy work for everyone."

The call launched a joint initiative sponsored by IndependentVoting.org and Open Primaries to mobilize support for the Open Our Democracy campaign by lobbying Congressmembers and publicizing the bill.



**Send a letter to your Congressman now asking him or her to cosponsor the bill by clicking here.**

To join the campaign, [click here](#) or email [national@independentvoting.org](mailto:national@independentvoting.org)

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR



**Sunday, July 26, 7pm ET: Spokesperson Training Call with Director of Communications Sarah Lyons.** Advance your skills as a spokesperson for the concerns and issues of independents. Whether it's composing a letter to the editor, speaking to an organization, or appearing on radio or TV, join the conference call to get tips and support from Sarah. On this call, Sarah will be teaching the ABC's about how to talk about the **Open Our Democracy Campaign** to the press and the public. [Register here.](#)

## Independent Leaders to Rep. Carolyn Maloney in New York: Help Us Open Our Democracy!

NYC Independence Club members Ed Brady, Alvaader Frazier, Nancy Ross and Cathy Stewart kicked off the **Open Our Democracy Campaign** on Monday, meeting with Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney. Rep. Maloney represents the Upper East Side of Manhattan and neighborhoods in Queens and Brooklyn. They asked Maloney to become a co-sponsor of the Open Our Democracy Act. Maloney began the meeting by recalling that in 1982 she had met Nancy on the campaign trail while both were running for office - Nancy as an independent, Maloney as a Democrat.



Ed Brady, Cathy Stewart, Nancy Ross, Rep. Carolyn Maloney, Alvaader Frazier

Cathy reminded the Congresswoman that there are over 118,000 independents in her district who are locked out of the primaries. Alvaader asked the Congresswoman to become a co-sponsor of the bill. While Maloney agreed that Election Day should be a holiday, she wanted to "read and think about" the remainder of the bill which includes provisions for nonpartisan Top Two open primaries for all US House and Senate seats and redistricting reform. Of course, these are the key reforms in the bill which would unlock partisanship and gridlock.

*"It is important to put this issue before every Congressperson and to force them to take a position,"* said Stewart. *"The next step will be to organize dozens of Rep. Maloney's constituents to send in a postcard asking her to co-sponsor the bill. Then Alvaader will follow up with the Congressperson's Chief of Staff."* **So stay tuned!**

## Petition to SCOTUS Says Closed Primaries Are Unconstitutional

A national coalition of election reform organizations led by the Independent Voter Project (IVP) and IndependentVoting.org filed a petition for 'Writ of Certiorari' with the Supreme Court of the United States last week in a case challenging the constitutionality of New Jersey's closed primary election system. The coalition is petitioning the Court to declare that the fundamental right to vote is a nonpartisan right. Under its current law, however, New Jersey requires that a voter join either the Republican or Democratic political parties as a condition of participating at an integral stage of its non-presidential elections. Such a system robs citizens of the most important liberty asserted in the Declaration of Independence: the right to govern themselves.

[Read more here.](#)

### A Profile in Independence:

Cassia Herron, Louisville, KY

Cassia Herron is a native Kentuckian, who has spent over 15 years working in the areas of community engagement, economic development and efforts to improve the local food economy. She was raised in Richmond - a small agricultural town - and has spent the other half of her life in dense, urban neighborhoods in Louisville. As a community organizer, she has invested her time in helping to bridge urban and rural communities.

Cassia became an independent after participating in a candidate screening process for metro council representative. She was turned off by the extent to which partisanship ruled the vote. *"I decided then that I never again wanted to be represented by either of these parties."*

Cassia continued: *"Why do I have to join a political party in order to exercise my right to vote? Why have Kentuckians allowed partisan politics to disenfranchise ex-offenders and gerrymander voting districts that leave thousands of citizens without a voice? It's past time to change this dynamic! I'm excited about connecting with other independent leaders across the country and having a network of supporters who can help Kentucky independents find their voice."*



### In the News

*Meet the Press* host Chuck Todd spoke about the dramatic rise in the numbers of independent / unaffiliated voters. [Check it out.](#)

The *Albuquerque Free Press* wrote of Bob Perls' efforts in New Mexico in "Breaking the Two Party Stranglehold." [Read here.](#)

Jackie Salit's column, "Hillary Clinton, Hardly a Champion of Voting Rights," was featured in the *Waco Tribune-Herald*. [Read here.](#)

Jim Rohrer, an independent from Evergreen, Colorado, writes about politics and culture for his column in the *Canyon Courier*. [Read "Primary System Disenfranchises Voters" here.](#)

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