



September 14, 2017

## Independents at the People's Convergence Conference

Jackie Salit appeared with Dr. Jill Stein, former Green Party presidential candidate, on a panel on "Progressive Prospects in 2018 and 2020" at the People's Convergence Conference held over the weekend at American University's School of Law in Washington, D.C.

Over 200 people attended the conference organized by the Draft Bernie for a People's Party, the Progressive Independent Party and Socialist Alternative, in order to discuss a path forward and "extend an invitation to Bernie Sanders to join a discussion about the future of the progressive movement and the country." Prior to the conference, 50,000 "Draft Bernie" signatures were delivered to his office. Sanders did not accept an invitation to attend the conference.



Joining Salit and Stein on the panel were Charles Douglas (People's Party of North Carolina), Peter Joseph (Zeitgeist Institute), Nick Brana (Draft Bernie for a People's

Party) and Araquel Bloss (Progressive Independent Party). Brian Jones of the Justice Party moderated.



(L to R) Cathy Stewart, Vice President, Independent Voting; Jackie Salit; Gwen Mandell, Director of National Outreach; Rick Robol, Chair, Independent Ohio.

Salit spoke about the history of the Reform Party and the unique left/center/right coalition that led to its founding.

*" We found that you actually could bring Americans together across ideological, class, race, geographic, and generational lines by focusing on the issue of process and power and being willing to backburner a set of issues that were close to everyone's heart in favor of using process, structural reform, and restoration of a true democratic process. I continue to hold to the belief that that is an important tool that we have as progressives to build with."*

Salit continued, *" The American people are saying 'we need to change the power structure in this country.' We, I believe, as progressives, have a responsibility to give to them and create for them what they are asking for."*

[Watch the full panel discussion here.](#)

## The Neo-Independent: The Questions are Blowin' in the Wind

The **Independent Voter Network** (IVN.US) welcomed Jackie Salit as a regular columnist on the site this week, with the introduction of her first installment: "The Neo-Independent: The Questions are Blowin' in the Wind."

The column revives *The Neo-Independent* name, which previously was a print magazine published by Salit from 2004-2008. As she describes in the column, " *The Neo-Independent* was to signify that we were creating an independent alternative to the neo-cons in the post-Perot, post-Reform Party world. I always loved the name (and the magazine) and so I chose to re-purpose it for this column."



In this week's column, Salit takes a look at some of the challenges of this moment.

*"Everything is turned upside down, everything is fevered, everything is being washed away. And yet (and this is the craziest thing of all) nothing seems to change."*

[Read the column.](#)

## Sign the Petition to Support Open Primaries in Florida

A petition to urge Florida's Constitution Revision Commission (CRC) to put an open primaries measure on the 2018 ballot is being spearheaded by Florida Fair and Open Primaries (FFAOP), the organization which represents independent voters in Florida.

With support from Open Primaries, Independent Voting and Tim Canova's Progress for All, signatures are being collected by activists and online. September 22 is the deadline for

submitting a formal proposal to the CRC, and organizers expect to submit thousands of signatures along with the proposal.

"We have made great progress thus far," said Steve Hough, spokesperson for FFAOP and leader of the drive. "Our network is growing, and we continue to generate interest and support. Andrew Huston's [letter to the editor](#) was just published in the Gainesville Sun. We have also been contacted by a person running for Palm Beach County Commission who is supporting our effort, as well as an NPA [No Party Affiliation] attempting to qualify for the governor's race. Generating this type of support with the political class is a big deal. Tim Canova's organization (Progress for All) has been a huge help."



## Please sign the petition to let Florida voters decide on open primaries!

Here's what other activists of the campaign are saying:



"Because of sophisticated gerrymandering by advanced computerized technologies, primary elections are often the moment when winning candidates are selected. Primaries are increasingly the only meaningful round of voting for 'We the People' of Florida ."

- Warren Clark, St. Augustine

[Read Warren's Letter to the Editor here](#)

" I am working to open the primaries in Florida so that the NPA's of our state can finally have an equal voice! ... the gerrymandering has to stop, and it ends with open primaries." - Kristen Kiernan, Jacksonville

" Our government has become all about what's best for the political parties, not the people. Locking over three million Florida registered voters out of a publicly financed election is neither fair nor just. We need open primaries so that all politicians have to answer to all voters." - Elise Mysels, Land O Lakes.

## Why Are Social Protests Failing and How Can We Achieve Social Change Today?

Micah White, co-creator of Occupy Wall Street and author of *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution*, asks this important question in a piece written in *The Guardian*. In the piece, White examines opportunities for activists to intervene electorally without giving up their revolutionary edge.

White says: "Very few people have thought about activist electoral strategy as deeply as Jacqueline Salit, a former campaign manager for Dr Fulani's presidential campaign and an ongoing leader in America's independent political movement."



White is currently a participant in the Fulani Fellowship Program, a five month specialized training program with Dr. Lenora Fulani. This fellowship is a rigorous introduction to and immersion in the on-the-ground practice, methodology and approach to human development employed in the programs of the [All Stars Project](#).

[Read more here.](#)

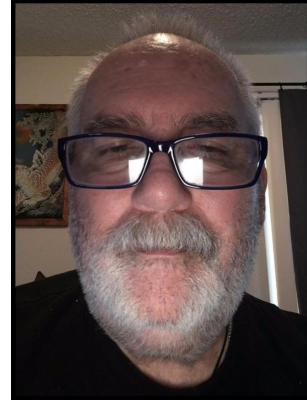
## Profiles in Independence

Rodney Pugh, Las Vegas Nevada

My name is Rodney Pugh. I live in Las Vegas, Nevada. I became interested in independent parties a few years ago. It began when I saw both parties were corrupt and unable to handle the situations they had created. The only thing they were doing was blaming each other. And then the American people.

I strongly believe in the American independence movement. I grew up in a household of politicians. My dad and his family were Republican and my mother was Democrat. My father's family was very involved in politics. My uncle on my Dad's side was Speaker of the House in Utah. I spent many summers helping him out and learning the ins and outs of politics and what it truly meant to be a politician, and saw things that the general public does not see. So politics was very much a part of my childhood.

When 18-year-olds were finally able to vote I campaigned for McGovern. And remember what a crushing blow that was when he lost! I was drafted into the military right after that and spent the next 30 years in the Air Force. I worked as a police officer and intelligence officer.



I help founded The Veterans Party of America. I liked the the opportunity to work with other people, helping them understand that there's much more they can do than vote just for the two party system. We need other options. We need our votes to count. The parties tell you you're wasting your vote if you don't vote for one of the two parties. We all have the right to vote and we can do it in any way we wish to. I decided I wanted to get involved with Independent Voting and the nonpartisan independent movement because I want people to know there's more than just two options.

## In the News

Read "[How Can Citizens Redress Their Grievances of an Unfair Election Process](#)," an Oped by Attorneys Tiani X. Coleman and Harry Kresky. ( *Huffington Post*).

"[We Must Change Our Election Primary Systems to Save Our Democracy](#)," editorial by Marvin Singleton, former state senator, Missouri ( *Kansas City Star*)

Independent Voting intern Caitlyn Parsons had her [letter to the editor](#) published in *The Saratogian*.

Read "[South Dakota Open Primaries Campaign to Get \\$140K Boost](#)" ( *US News*)

Check out this [NBC report](#) on the open primaries fight in Florida.

Read "[Making Primaries More Inclusive](#)," by Steve Hough (*Panama City News-Herald*) .



Independents have been sending in their questions for Salit to consider and answer on the next national conference call. Here are a few examples:

**Nathan Leach (Nebraska):**

Nebraska is the only state to use nonpartisan elections for their legislative elections. Would you support expanding that system to other states? What are the benefits/drawbacks of that system?



**Cindy Upchurch (Illinois):**

We're more organized, we're smarter, we're more dissatisfied than ever. So why is our protest/activism not making an impact? Why is it so easy to divide us?



**Francisco Pierre-Louis (Florida):**

When it comes to the 2020 election, what can independent and third party voters do to ensure we have another option?

**John Eldon, (California):**

Are parties the problem, or just a polarized two-party system?

## ***Political Parties: Are They Absolute or Obsolete?***

**Sunday, September 17th**

**4:00 pm ET**

**(3:00 pm CT, 2:00 pm MT, 1:00 pm PT)**

**[Register for the call here](#)**

### **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!

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