



225 BROADWAY, STE. 2010  
NEW YORK, NY 10007

**For Immediate Release:** July 23, 2014

**Contact:** Sarah Lyons / 212-962-1824

## **Independent Voter Group Creates Mobile App for Independent Voters**

**Smart phone technology offers easy way to access information and participate**

*New York, NY* — A non-profit organization based in Arizona and focused on making the election process more open and accessible announced today the creation of a new phone application designed to make it easier for nonpartisan and independent voters to participate in local, state and federal elections. Organizers say the goal is to expand voter registration and turnout.

Over 2,500 Arizona voters have already used the app to request a ballot for the upcoming elections. Arizona elections are conducted by mail and independents voters are not automatically sent a ballot for the primary elections but must submit a special request in order to receive one. The Secretary of State has indicated a record number of independents doing so this year.

The phone app, created for Open Nonpartisan Election by AIVA (Automated Independent Voters Assistant)LLC, includes information about how to register, where to vote and how to request a mail-in ballot. In addition, the app has questionnaires for candidates and voters, and includes information promoting a non-partisan or open primary system.

Paul Johnson, Chairman of Open Nonpartisan Elections and a former Phoenix Mayor, said the group wants to extend accessible voting rights to all Arizonans and all Americans regardless of their party or non-party registration.

“The key is to have more people engaged meaningfully in selecting those who will represent us in government,” said Johnson. “There are a lot of reasons to question an election system that rewards exclusions and partisan control. Bottom line, non-affiliated voters, now the largest voting bloc in Arizona, want their elected officials to represent everyone not just members of one party. That’s just common sense.”

Johnson, who chaired an initiative in 2012 to create a “Top Two” primary system for Arizona, said the key to stable and representative government, is active voter participation. “That initiative failed, but it would be a mistake to think that independent voters are going to just go away and allow the inequitable system that suppresses voter turnout to continue. We are back at the drawing board working on an alternative for 2016.”

**“What Paul Johnson and Open Nonpartisan Elections is doing to engage independents is so important,” said Jackie Salit, President of IndependentVoting.org. “Independents are not ‘apathetic’. They want a voice, not a party – in Arizona and across the country. I hope we can see apps like this in all 50 states soon!”**

We set out to create a more effective way to engage busy people who increasingly rely on the latest technology to make their lives easier,” Johnson said. “Mobile apps are used to engage in all kinds of activities. The easier it is to participation in elections, the better for everyone.”

### **Voter Phone App**

“Many voters now feel disconnected from the political system, and that comes at a great expense” Srinivasan said. “Through this iPhone and Android app, AIVA is intent on engaging those voters and making it easier for them to express their views and connect with their government regardless of party affiliation. By

involving more voters in the electoral process, we hope to see the views of all constituents represented.”

Creators of the mobile app say that it is intended to empower those voters who have disengaged from the process by either not voting in the primary or by changing registration to independent, or ‘other’. The Arizona Secretary of State’s website shows the latest registration numbers with Democrats at 29.5%, Republicans at 34.7% and independents, listed as “Other” at 34.9%. The less than 1% remainder is made up of Libertarian and Americans Elect.

Arizona law currently favors political parties by creating disadvantages for nonpartisan, independent voters and candidates: 1) Nonpartisan candidates must collect 10 times more signatures than their partisan counterparts to run for office; 2) Nonpartisan voters have to request an early ballot, whereas those registered with a party receive it automatically; and 3) Nonpartisan voters’ tax dollars are used to fund partisan primaries, which exclude independent candidates.

“Simply put, democracy continues to be a unique experiment, but it’s at its healthiest when more people get involved”, added Johnson.

“We are using technology to open the doors for voters to get registered, be informed, learn about how they can participate, and access ballots. Voting should not be hard. The more, the merrier.”

The mobile app is free and is available on iPhone or Android. It can be obtained by going to your app store and searching: Arizona Nonpartisan Movement.

###