



December 10, 2015

Questions Pour in for Upcoming National Conference Call

Jackie Salit will be devoting the next IndependentVoting.org national conference call to answering questions on the minds of independents from all around the country.

"These are troubling and fearful times," said Salit, "and the American people are more and more desperate for a way forward. Independents feel that way, too. But we also feel that our political system is unable to produce the leadership that is needed. How do we help our country move in a positive direction? That's what many people are asking me about."



The theme of the call is "**The Parties vs. the People: Where is the Power in Presidential Politics?**" and to date, more than 80 people from 29 states have contributed questions. Below is a sampling.

Steve Hough, Spokesperson for Florida Fair and Open Primaries - *An independent is running for President, but the reality is that he must seek the nomination of a major party in order to have any chance of success. Is Bernie Sanders' status as an independent diminished by him seeking the Democratic nomination, and how could he use his current platform to advance the cause of independent voters?*



Kem Todd, Independent Voters of Oregon - *Do you think Independents can share a platform without becoming the stale oatmeal of the two party system? Do Independents commonly agree on principles other than rejecting the two (maybe four) parties offered to them?*



Alvaader Frazier, Esq., leader of the New York City Independence Clubs - *What are your thoughts on endorsing a candidate for 2016?*



Join the call on Tuesday, December 15, 8pm ET

The Parties vs. the People: Where's the Power in Presidential Politics 2016?

[Register for the call here](#)

Arizona Republican Party to Independents: "Can't, won't.... and go take a hike"

Thousands of **letters** sent in recent weeks to the chairs of the Arizona Democratic and Republican parties urging that the 2016 Presidential preference election be opened to independents, has drawn a reply from the offices of the Arizona Republican Party. **"Can't, won't ... and go take a hike"** was essentially their response!

Independent Voters for Arizona along with **Open Primaries Arizona** have organized the effort to push for inclusion of independents. Over the course of three weeks, 3,500 letters have been sent to Alexis Tameron and Robert Graham, the respective chairs of the Democrat and Republican parties.

Currently Independent Voters for Arizona has 218 independents in 59 towns and cities who are getting signatures on the letter. In addition, Open Primaries Arizona has teams going door to door and doing outreach on campuses in Phoenix, Tucson, and Flagstaff.

On Tuesday, Nov. 17th, Tim Siefert, Director of Communications for the Arizona Republican Party, issued a reply.

"You should contact your Arizona legislators to lobby for a change in the law. That law says only party members have the right to choose their party nominee. In fact, it's actually the party's elected delegates to the national convention who choose the party's presidential nominee. It's a bit more complicated than that, but whoever put together your erroneous 'basic democracy' campaign has not done any of their homework on how the U.S President is elected. Again, thanks for contacting us."

Independents for Arizona issued a **press release**. In it, Harry Kresky, general counsel for IndependentVoting.org countered state Republican Chairman Robert Graham's claim, saying that the U.S. Supreme Court has long established that political parties hold full authority to open their primaries – something no state legislature can override.

"The presidential primaries are the most important elections taking place in the country next year, and no American should have to join a political party in order to have the right to vote in them."

Timothy Castro – Independent Voters for Arizona



Vibrant Discussion with *Politics For the People* Book Club Guest Latoya Ruby-Frazier



75 people joined a Politics for the People conference call where Book Club host and founder and IndependentVoting.org's Vice President of National Development, Cathy Stewart interviewed Latoya Ruby-Frazier about her book, *The Notion of Family*. The book is a retelling of the story (through photographs) of the collapse of the steel industry and the subsequent 30 years after in Latoya's hometown of Braddock, PA. It is told through the perspective of Latoya's grandmother Ruby who grew up in the 30s, her mother in the 60s and she in the 80s and 90s. The conference call followed several months of P4P members submitting poignant expressions of their thoughts about images in Frazier's book which were posted on the [Politics for the People blog](#).



On the call, Stewart discussed with Frazier how she came to create this extraordinary work over 12 years. Said Frazier:

"I always had the passion and the conviction to make my own history book with my own voice and insert myself into this rich history of looking at the impact of Andrew Carnegie on my own culture and heritage and how that's played out over the years."

After an initial conversation, Stewart opened up the call for questions and comments. Prefacing their questions, members shared their thoughts with Frazier about her book. Here are three of those voices:



Juliana Francisco (Brooklyn) "You showed me an innovative new way to cope with life and family through art, and I'm really inspired by you, especially through your relationship with your mother. I was struck by how much was done to dehumanize and keep the black community in Braddock from prospering. I grew up under somewhat similar circumstances in Brooklyn. Growing up in poverty and witnessing poverty all around, and also finally coming to the realization that politicians and political parties don't care and aren't going to do anything to help us out really took a toll on me. I'm 22 now and I'm only now breaking free of that stuff."

Tiani Coleman (President, New Hampshire Independent Voters) "It's the first time I had ever looked at a social documentary through portraiture and I've come to really appreciate that form of art and your ability to do it. It impacted me very deeply and I think part of the reason why it did

was because you weren't really telling me a story directly. It wasn't didactic, but very symbolic, and you left it open, so that I could actually have my own experience as I was sharing your experience..."

Stay tuned to the **Politics for the People** blog where the recording of the conversation with Latoya Ruby Frazier will be posted next week.



A Profile in Independence:

Kim Tressel, Iowa

Kim Tressel has been following IndependentVoting.org for a while now, but recently she decided it was time to take action. *"Since Iowa is very influential in the early stages of the presidential race I think it would be pertinent to have a presence there,"* she said in her note inquiring about how she could make a contribution in this area.



Kim currently works as a medical coder for the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics. She has been a registered independent since age 18, except when she briefly changed her registration to vote in the 2008 Democratic caucus.

"I very much wanted to participate but regretted having to sell out in order to participate. Many folks think they have to be part of a political party in order to be heard, but I believe it is We the People not we the Sheeple, and voters should vote based on their beliefs and not conform to a party's platform."

In the News

- Utah League of Independent Voters' Randy Miller and Tiani Coleman, past chair of the Salt Lake County Republican Party and currently president of New Hampshire Independent Voters, co-authored "**Take Control of Elections Away from the Parties**," an opinion piece which appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Soon thereafter, a federal judge ruled that the **SB54 case does not apply to the Democratic Party**, substantiating Miller and Coleman's point that the important issue is the call for an end to public elections being controlled by political parties.
- Florida Fair and Open Primaries' Steve Hough wrote an Op Ed on refugees and the two parties, "**Two Party Politics Clouds Our Judgment on Refugee Crisis**."
- New Mexico Open Primaries' Bob Perls' latest radio appearance was on the **Richard Eeds show**, a podcast that appears on *SantaFe.com*.
- Open Primaries Arizona Director Patrick McWhorter authored an opinion piece that appeared in the *Arizona Capitol Times*, "**Arizona Independents are Rising and Demanding Equality**."
- Tucson Independent Voters for Arizona leader Jim Morrison responds to comments made by the Arizona Republican Party Chairman in the *Arizona Capitol Times* with "**An Independent Responds to the Arizona Republican Chairman**."

A Letter from League of Women Voters member and independent, Joe Pickering, to the LWV President Elizabeth McNamara

Joe Pickering, independent in Bangor, Maine and a member of the League of Women Voters wrote League President Elizabeth McNamara to share his thoughts. Here are excerpts from his letter:

Dear Elizabeth:

....Question for you and all of us. How has our League of Women Voters empowered the independent voter who can't vote in primaries without having to join a party? What is the position of the National League of Women Voters on Open Primaries or more importantly at every level of our election process from Presidential through the Primaries? The independent vote now constitutes 43% of the American Electorate. Are they part of our Democracy or not? 95,000,000 Americans didn't even bother to vote in the 2012 elections. Perhaps because many of them are fed up with the antics of the parties. May our League of Women Voters reclaim its moral leadership as it did when it called out both the Republican and the Democratic Party in 1988 with a blistering public release.....



....Our National League does not have the legal means to challenge what the 1988 National League called the "HOODWINKING of the American people." But, Elisabeth, no legal challenge needs to be made. We have something far more powerful than legal means. I urge our League to use its MORAL AUTHORITY to truly make Democracy Work for We the People, not only those voters within the party framework.....

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Give us a call today!

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