



March 24, 2016

VOTES: Independent Political Theater on 42nd St.

If you're planning on being in New York City over the next several weeks, you'll want to visit the Castillo Theater on 42nd Street where IndependentVoting.org's President Jackie Salit's musical play, **Votes**, opens on April 1 and runs through May 8.

The play questions the nature of feminism, of power and of the political game itself. It is at times dramatic and at times comedic.

Votes draws on a 1999 musical, written by Fred Newman, *The Last Temptation of William*

Jefferson. The play, written in the wake of the infamous Monica Lewinsky scandal, featured music and lyrics by Fred Newman and Annie Roboff. Seventeen years later, Salit takes *Temptation* and wraps a new story around it, examining the political and personal conflicts of the famous First Couple.

"I think the play is not pro or anti Hillary," says Salit. "The play is an effort to look at someone in Hillary's position from a different angle and to perhaps offer some new ways to think about what it means to be a political woman, new ways to think about progressivism, new ways to think about 'playing the game,' and ultimately changing the rules of the game."

To learn more about the play from Jackie Salit herself, you can watch [this video](#) taped for a



recent promotional event for audience builders and subscription holders at the Castillo Theater.

[Click here to purchase tickets.](#)

Arizona Open Primary Campaign Halts as Independents Ask: Can this Phoenix Rise from the Ashes?

"During my 30 years in independent politics," writes Jackie Salit, "I have been a part of several efforts to create unorthodox coalitions whose very existence challenges the partisan status quo." The Arizona Open and Honest Elections coalition was one such effort, but its efforts had to be suspended two weeks ago.

Salit's full analysis of the coalition's decision to suspend its operation to secure ballot access for two political reform initiatives is available [here](#).

"The imploding of this effort," continues Salit "is a blow to all voters, most especially independent voters who oppose party control of the political system and the unfairness it produces. The evidence for this is abundant. In a single night, 14,000 Arizona independents participated in an electronic town hall meeting about the campaign. 30,800 independents sent letters to the heads of the Democratic and Republican parties, calling on them to open the presidential primaries on March 22nd. Thousands of Arizona voters were already signing petitions to put these initiatives on the ballot this November. "



Statement about the AZ Presidential Primary Election.

Arizona's presidential preference election this week was marred by long lines and wait times for voters, prompting the Governor to go on record about the fiasco and state: *"One way we can fix things is to simplify them," he said in a statement. "That means allowing independents to vote in presidential primaries, just as they vote in all other Arizona primaries."*

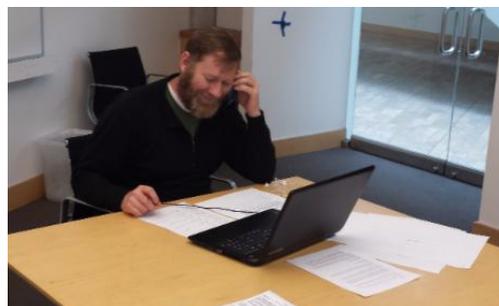


[Read the statement issued by Tim Castro of Independent Voters for Arizona and Jacqueline Salit in response.](#)

Utah League of Independent Voters Dial for Democracy

Utah League of Independent Voters dialed their grassroots organizing up a notch by taking to the phones and reaching across state borders to meet and educate independents in nearby Arizona.

Reports Randy Miller, orchestrator of this effort, "*Together with Independentvoting.org and Independent Voters of Arizona, we put together a plan to get independent Utah voters involved in the Arizona scrum. We arranged a mobile phone banking effort using our own cell phones to call with, a library conference room, scripts and lists of Arizona voters who had supported an effort to pressure the Democratic and Republican Parties to*



Randy Miller

open the presidential primaries to independents. We started with a briefing from Tim Castro in Phoenix via Skype and then got busy calling.

When I called volunteer Jerrick Davis to make sure he was coming to our phone banking for independents, he told me "I wouldn't miss it!"



Jerrick Davis

" I was pleasantly surprised to find excitement and passion on the other side of the phone. Arizona has some great independent voters who know that they need open primaries to level the playing field," said PJ Steiner, Vice President of the Utah League of Independent Voters.

Said Miller, "We felt this was an opportunity to build locally and lend a hand to a hot spot further south. We'd love to do it again !"

New Jersey Independent Voters Meet

Sue Davies, a long-time supporter of IndependentVoting.org, who recently moved to New Jersey, organized a statewide conference call that took place on March 5th, to reinvigorate the network of independents in the state. Cathy Stewart, Vice President of Development at IndependentVoting.org joined the call and gave an update on national developments and a recap of the groundbreaking New Jersey lawsuit that challenged the right of the state to use tax payer money to fund primaries that exclude independents who comprise 47% of New Jersey voters. That case represented a group of 12 plaintiffs brought together by IndependentVoting.org and included independents, Democrats and Republicans.



Sue Davies

The independents on the call hailed from all over the state and included: Rebecca Feldman (Morristown), Mark Balsam (North Bergen), Mary Johnson (Oakhurst), Don Harris (Pompton Plains) and Han Henkes (Princeton). The network will be actively challenging the requirement that unaffiliated voters choose a party in order to participate in the upcoming presidential primaries on June 7th. **New Jersey Independent Voters** can be reached at njindependentvoters@gmail.com or via the [facebook page](#).

Profiles in Independence:

Gwendolyn Samuel, Meriden, Connecticut

Gwen Samuel has been fighting for Connecticut families for many years. Prior to establishing Equity Impact Strategies, a community relations/government affairs advocacy firm, Gwen founded three organizations: Connecticut Parents Union; the State of Black Connecticut Alliance; and the Meriden Kids Safe Coalition - Safe Routes to School Initiative. She has championed two parent empowerment bills that became law in the state: a law that mandates school governance councils to be implemented in every low performing school, and a law which stops the felony arrest of parents who enroll their children in schools outside of their zip-code. Here is Gwen in a recent appearance on "**Tomorrow Matters**."



Gwen Samuel

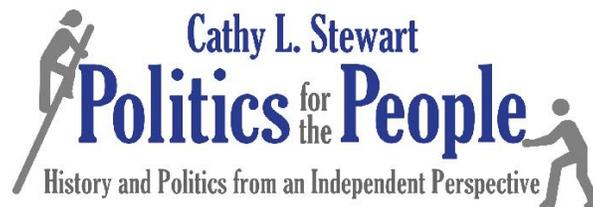
Recently Gwen left the Democratic Party and registered as an independent. (Connecticut calls independents unaffiliated voters.) Like everything else Samuel does, she went "all in," eager to organize a context to empower others in her community to become independent along with her. **Listen to Samuel's declaration of independence in a call to CSPAN.**

Said Samuel: I believe, just like me, so many hardworking Americans are *angry* with *both* parties. The unaffiliated and independent voters are the "game changers." The unaffiliated will upset some

apple carts in local, state and presidential races and we, the independent thinkers, will determine who wins elections in upcoming races.

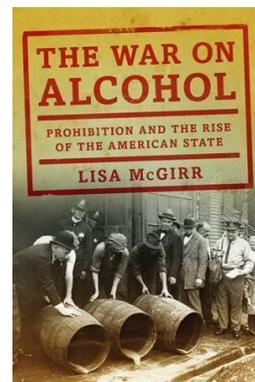
I believe the political parties are not thinking of the working class struggling with high unemployment rates, displaced workers in need of job training and small business owners in need of equitable access to opportunity. What about our future workforce - our children! I don't believe the parties are thinking about the parents who are striving to ensure their children access to safe, high quality schools. So many hardworking Americans are tired of being taken for granted and tired of gridlock at the congressional level at the expense of our families' well being. Our children, families and communities' well-being are no longer up for sale to the highest bidder during election season.

What makes America great is the right to choose, and I choose to be an independent thinker who chooses a *person over* a Party to speak for me and my family at the local, state and federal levels."



The Politics for the People book club is currently reading *The War on Alcohol: Prohibition and the Rise of the American State* by Lisa McGirr, a professor of history at Harvard. In the book, McGirr looks at how Prohibition, for all its shortcomings, laid the foundation for the expansion of federal power, the modern penal state, and our ongoing unsuccessful war on drugs.

Check out more on the topic on the **Politics for the People Blog** and join a fascinating discussion on Sunday, April 3 where P4P founder Cathy Stewart discusses the book with McGirr and P4P members.



**P4P Conference Call with Lisa McGirr
Sunday, April 3rd at 7 pm EST
Call in number (641) 715-3605
Access code 767775#**

In the News

- Natesha Oliver, founder of MIST (**Missouri Independents Stand Together**), had **her letter to the editor** published in the *Kansas City Star*, following the Missouri primary.
- Eunice Stronger, Outreach Coordinator for California's **IndependentVoice.org** wrote a blog post, building off of Jackie Salit's "Bernie: We're In a Bind" article. **Read the blog post here.**
- Dr. Omar Ali, interim dean of The University of North Carolina at Greensboro and leader of **North Carolina Independents**, was featured on a "News Chronicle" panel about independents and the primaries. **Here's the clip** from *WXII* Channel 12 news, Winston Salem.
- **Independent Voters of Nevada** founder Catana Barnes was interviewed for the *Las Vegas Sun* in **this piece** about Nevada's nonpartisan voters.



- Amanda Melcher of **Independent Voters for Arizona** had her letter, "**This Millennial Wants a New Way to Vote**," published in the *Arizona Republic*.
- Duane Pike, spokesperson for **Florida Fair and Open Primaries**, was interviewed for several articles, including "**Shut out: is Florida's Closed Primary System Bad for Democracy?**" in Tampa Bay's *Creative Loafing*; and in "**Does Florida's Closed Primary Shut the Door on Democracy?**" which appeared in Florida's *Public News Service*.



Join IndependentVoting.org's network of activists and leaders from across the country on our next National Conference Call.

Dial in to hear a briefing from IndependentVoting.org President Jacqueline Salit on the state of the independent movement, our democracy, and an independent perspective on the presidential race.

**Tuesday, April 26
8pm ET
(7pm CT, 6pm MT, 5pm PT)**

Register here for the call

Gwen Mandell
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IndependentVoting.org
800-288-3201

Give us a call today!

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