



May 12, 2016

## Rules of the Game

The *Rules of The Game* was the theme of IndependentVoting.org's national conference call last week joined by 200 independents from 40 states and Puerto Rico, many coming on the call for the first time. Jackie Salit, IndependentVoting.org's President highlighted the relationship between how the political process works, who allowed to participate in it, what the terms of the process are and critical issues facing the country. In addressing the current political climate, she referred to the "hinge moment" as it relates to independents. Jackie said:

*" The national conversation itself has to become a conversation about the process, and that is the direction I think things are heading in, and that's the hinge moment we're at."*

Salit continued: *" We have seen the country go, in just a few months, from a country that was focused solely on issues as defined by the candidates, to a country that is engaging with and learning about the process -- the rules, the impact of those rules on our lives, the way we conduct our democracy -- and America has found it wanting. The system is wanting."*



**Listen to the complete call.**

## "The World Has Changed," says Sanders. "More and More People are Independents."



In response to Democratic Party Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz proclaiming that she doesn't think independents should vote in party primaries, Sanders responded: *"Debbie has got it backwards. More and more people are going outside of the Democratic and Republican parties. We have millions and millions of independents out there. And to say that when a primary takes place such as the case in New York State, that three million people should be disenfranchised and not be able to vote for the Democratic candidate or the Republican, I think it makes no sense at all. The world has changed. More and more people are independents. I think it makes no sense for the Democrats to say to those people, 'you can't help us'."*

### Independent Leader Questions Sen. Sanders on Open Primaries

Along with seven other veterans and one gold star mother, Rick Robol, leader of Independent Ohio and IndependentVoting.org's National Election Reform Committee, was invited to meet with Senator Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-HI) on April 22 at Gettysburg College.

Senator Sanders took questions from the vets, mainly on veterans affairs and foreign policy. Robol seized the opportunity to ask Senator Sanders what he would do to fix the primary electoral process that excludes independents.

*"When serving overseas, I wasn't serving for the benefit of a party," said Robol. "I was serving the people, yet we have a situation where independents are disenfranchised from participating in our process. What will you do to fix the problem?"* Senator Sanders denounced closed primaries such as those that had excluded over three million New York Independents from a meaningful voice in the election process. Taking a note from Lincoln's Gettysburg address, he called for "government of the people, by the people, for the people."



(Congresswoman Gabbard in red jacket; Robol is sitting in the second row with a VFW cap).

## Jackie Salit in South Dakota - Listen in on Tuesday

Jackie Salit will appear in studio on KSOO AM radio (1140) at 4:30pm CT on Tuesday, May 17. The show is hosted by Rick Knobe, former Sioux Falls Mayor, an independent and a leader of the coalition South Dakotans for Non-Partisan Elections which is working to pass Amendment V, a ballot measure for nonpartisan primaries this November. Jackie will be in Sioux Falls at the invitation of Knobe to meet with independents and key leaders of the effort. [LISTEN LIVE.](#)



IndependentVoting.org polling of South Dakota residents shows that almost 90% of pollees agree that no American should be forced to join a political party in order to vote. While only 13% of those polled knew about Amendment V, 83% said that now that they are aware, they would vote for it.

## Independent Break-Through on CNN Voter Panel

Carrie Sackett (top, second from right) and Bryan Solomon-Puertas (top, left), members of the NYC Independence Clubs (IndependentVoting.org's NYC affiliate) participated in a CNN panel on its morning show *New Day with New York City*.



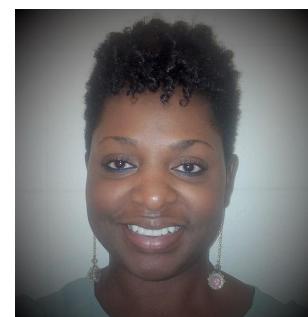
Sackett turned the conversation from Donald Trump's ability to win over female voters to the issues that unite independents: "We all agree the process is broken," she said. "We need structural political reforms to open up the process so that all Americans can participate and so we can have a national conversation." Bryan Solomon-Puertas closed the segment out with a strong statement about the candidates "...Once they get elected, they have no real chance of enacting their agenda -- there's such hyper-partisanship in Congress. We need structural reforms like open primaries and nonpartisan redistricting reform - things that change the ways candidates get nominated and elected so they can change the way they govern."

[Watch the full segment here.](#)

## Kentucky Congressman Cosponsors Open Our Democracy Act

Congressman John Yarmuth (KY) is the latest to co-sponsor H.R. 2655, the Open Our Democracy Act, a gridlock-fighting package of reform, designed to empower voters by enacting Top Two nonpartisan primaries for all congressional elections, making Election Day a national holiday and creating a roadmap for redistricting reform to end the practice of partisan gerrymandering.

Independent Kentucky has been courting Yarmuth's support for political reform issues like the ones the bill puts forth since 2011 and put out a press release applauding Yarmuth's action. Michael Lewis and William Bowe of Independent Kentucky first met with the Congressman back then, and in 2012 delivered 2,300 signatures and postcards signed by Kentucky residents in support of these political



Cassia Herr

reform issues.

Voting reform advocate Cassia Herron says, "Across the country, closed partisan primaries exclude millions of independent voters and contribute to the toxic partisanship in Washington, Frankfort and in every state capital across the country. It's past time for us to reform our primary system so that the voters, not the parties, have the power to elect the political leaders we seek to represent us."

Nearly 250,000 Kentucky voters are registered independent voters.

**Here's how you can send a letter to your Congressperson advocating that they co-sponsor the Open Our Democracy Act.**

## Profiles in Independence:

Jeff Leader, Wichita Kansas

Jeff Leader, a new member of the IndependentVoting.org network, was born and raised in Kansas and has lived there most of his life. "I decided to have three careers after an article about trends in careers talked about the end of the single-career American." Jeff ran a business, Air Capital Comics, was a systems engineer for a number of years but said he found his last passion when he worked as a senior technical trainer in adult education. After winning numerous awards for creative teaching/sales curriculum and presentations, he decided he wanted to give back. While working towards a primary education teaching degree, he got the opportunity to teach and mentor 6th through 8th grade students in the Wichita Public School system. Jeff is also a member of his neighborhood association and a devoted father.



Jeff Leader

After attending his first national conference call, Jeff said "It was nice to get an opportunity to listen in on a conference call with people who are like me, independent voters. I think I may have finally found a group of people who share many of my personal beliefs about politics and the direction we should be taking for our country to become a much more democratic system. It was good to hear a solid forward-looking strategy to carry the independent movement toward progress. I am setting up a group of like-minded voters in my home state of Kansas called Kansas Independents." If you're in Kansas, contact Jeff at [mrleadersmath@outlook.com](mailto:mrleadersmath@outlook.com).

## In the News

- Harry Kresky, Counsel for IndependentVoting.org and Michael Hardy, General Counsel and Executive President for the National Action Network, authored "**It's Time to Expand Voting Rights**," (*Huffington Post*)
- Read "**How to Fix the Primaries**," authored by the *Philadelphia Enquirer* editorial board on the eve of the Pennsylvania primaries. "The dismantling of the primary system as we know it is in one respect well underway. The spread of the open primary, which allows all registered voters to participate regardless of affiliation, has facilitated the success of party outsiders Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders. Pennsylvania and New Jersey are now in a minority of 14 states with completely closed presidential nomination votes, according to the group Open Primaries - which, by the way, found deep reserves of local angst over closed primaries after Philadelphia's latest mayoral election."
- "**The Independent Voter: Pushing Past Party Lines**" in the *UNCG Research magazine*, features Dr. Omar Ali, UNCG Associate Professor and Interim Dean. Ali also leads North Carolina Independents.
- California IndependentVoting.org supporter Jeff Gerber had a letter to the editor published. Read **Millions of Independents are Left Out of the Primaries: That Must Change** (*Los*



Angeles Times).

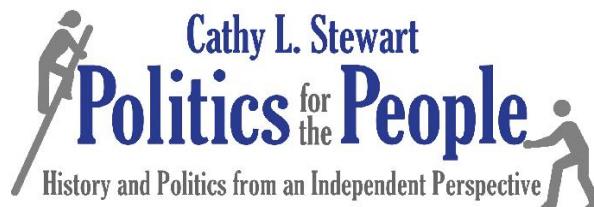
## Sharpen Your Independent Voice Join the Next Spokesperson Training call

Independents are more and more becoming the voice of the excluded - the millions of voters locked out of the process by virtue of our decision not to be partisan.

Being a voice for independents is not always easy. We want to be able to participate in the political process on the basis of what's needed for our community, our state, and our country. And the political system does not permit that.



*Join our next spokesperson training call led by Sarah Lyons, Director of National Communications, to get some tips on how to advance the concerns of independents. The next call is Sunday, June 12 at 7pm ET. [Here is a link to register for that call.](#)*

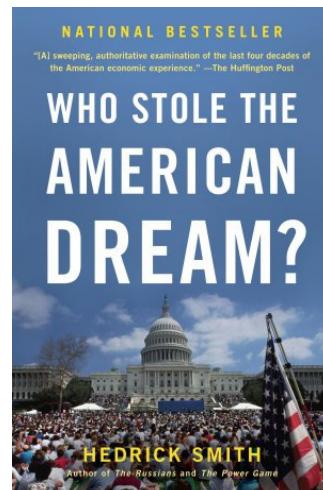


The **Politics for the People Book Club** has announced its next selection. It's *Who Stole the American Dream?* by Hedrick Smith, a bestselling author, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter, and Emmy Award-winning producer. Smith has written five best selling books, including *The Russians* and *The Power Game*. As a reporter at *The New York Times*, he shared a Pulitzer for the Pentagon Papers series and won a Pulitzer for his international reporting from Russia in 1971-1974. In addition, Smith has been a producer for PBS' "Frontline."

In *Who Stole the American Dream?*, Smith analyzes what



happened to the American dream over the last four decades, how it is that our economy has crumbled and we have become so divided as a country.



Cathy Stewart, founder of the Book Club, met Hedrick in February in New Hampshire, when both he and Jackie Salit, President of IndependentVoting.org, spoke at the New Hampshire Rebellion, We the People Convention. Hedrick is an outspoken advocate for structural political reforms from campaign finance reform to ending gerrymandering and top two nonpartisan elections. Cathy will be interviewing Hedrick on a conference call on Sunday, June 19 at 7pm.

### 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!**

Gwen Mandell  
Director of National Outreach  
IndependentVoting.org  
800-288-3201

[gmandell@independentvoting.org](mailto:gmandell@independentvoting.org)

*Give us a call today!*

*Share the Hub with friends and ask them to subscribe*

**STAY CONNECTED**

 Like us on Facebook