



June 23, 2016

Open Letter to Clinton, Johnson, Sanders, Stein, and Trump from Two Fellow Americans

This open letter was written by Jacqueline Salit, President of IndependentVoting.org, and Cathy Stewart, Vice President of National Development of IndependentVoting.org in the wake of the Orlando tragedy. It was published in [Independent Voter News](#).

In the 48 hours since the mass murder in Orlando, the political environment in our country is worsening. Leaders such as yourselves -- who seek the office of the presidency -- must take responsibility for that.

Put campaign interests aside and have a serious and principled conversation together and with the American people about the unsettling nature of this devastating act of violence, rather than jockey for position and votes.



We call on you to suspend your campaigning to hold a joint press conference to demonstrate that communicating across the ideological and partisan divide serves the American people best. Whatever differences

exist with respect to a posture on terrorism and crimes in the name of Islam, on gun violence and on the free expression of human sexuality, it would be meaningful to the American people for such a joint action to take place. Law enforcement is doing its job, and it is a difficult one. But it's not sufficient for any of us to say on Facebook or Twitter or at the Tony Awards or at campaign rallies that these events must make us stronger, unless we actually do something to make ourselves stronger. You cannot say this is a time where Americans must stand together if the presumptive leaders won't.

The problem is that the culture of our partisan election system makes it difficult, if not impossible, to respond as a unified nation. Everything that the Orlando massacre raises does not reduce to guns or immigration. And no candidate, regardless of what they claim, has cornered the market on truth. Obviously, a joint appearance among the five of you would be shocking to many, but the violence has already shocked us. A shocking response that changes our political culture might put us-and the world-on a safer and better path.

Jacqueline Salit, President, IndependentVoting.org

Cathy Stewart, Vice President, National Development, IndependentVoting.org

What's On Your Mind?

Next Tuesday, June 28th at 8pm ET, Jackie Salit, President of IndependentVoting.org, will host a national conference call titled, "**Convention Fever: an Independent's Unconventional Guide to the Democratic and Republican Conventions**," and respond to questions sent in from members of the IndependentVoting.org network. Dozens of questions have been submitted on a wide range of topics. Here are a few. **Have you sent your question in?**

Frank Day, activist in the Bernie Sanders campaign in Santa Rosa, Florida: In a recent interview with Lester Holt, Hillary Clinton refused to give Senator Sanders credit for anything in her platform, only for bringing passion and new voters into the campaign. Do you think he and his delegates will be able to have much impact on the Democratic platform at the Convention in Philadelphia?



Linda Minney, Winston-Salem, North Carolina: What is a good, concise response to accusations that independents are "spoilers"?

Steven Aponte, Project Manager and new member of IndependentVoting.org from Gutenberg, New Jersey: "With Bernie Sanders bringing the open primaries issue to the DNC, how can we make the issue stick after the election is over and not be ignored?"



Elyse Mendel, Brooklyn, New York : How does an Independent think about voting in November? I don't want to play the lesser of two evils game, and don't like either one, and so what's an indy to do?

Come on the call Tuesday to hear Jackie's answers. Questions can be sent to national@independentvoting.org.

[Register here for the call](#) .

Campaign to Open the Presidential Primaries Heats Up

A petition asking the DNC and RNC Rules Committees to open the Presidential Primaries in 2020 is circulating and gaining steam. The effort is sponsored nationally by Open Primaries with the aim of delivering 100,000 signatures to the Rules Committees of both the Democratic Party and Republican Party national conventions.



In New York, Open Primaries and the **New**



York City Independence Clubs have teamed up with many activists from the Sanders campaign to form New Yorkers for Primary Reform. This past weekend they sponsored a signature drive that produced over 1000 signatures and had teams petitioning in Harlem, the Upper East Side, and Brooklyn. To date, over 30,000 signatures have been gathered.

Hope you will **take a moment to sign and share the petition** and check out the video

put out by Open Primaries.

Michael Hardy Submits Video Testimony to the DNC

Michael Hardy, Esq., General Counsel and Executive Vice President of the National Action Network, submitted testimony to the Democratic National Committee urging a platform plank be adopted which calls for the inclusion of all voters in presidential primaries, regardless of race, gender or partisan affiliation. The Democratic Party has invited members to give written, video, or in-person testimony on the Democratic platform.

"What we are seeing is a broadening of the traditional voting rights agenda," stated Hardy. " I am submitting this video testimony to urge our convention to adopt a platform plank calling for full participation in the presidential primary process for all citizens regardless of race, gender or formal political affiliation. It's time to once again place fundamental principles of popular sovereignty and full participation in our electoral process upfront in our platform if we are truly to be Democrats and if we truly want to fight to be a proud democracy."



Click [here to read](#) and [here for the video testimony](#).

In sharp contrast, the **Congressional Black Caucus came out against opening the Presidential Primaries and against reforming the super-delegate system of the Democratic Party.**

Why I'm an Independent - Spokesperson Trainees at Work

On June 12th, IndependentVoting.org Director of Communications Sarah Lyons led a spokesperson training attended by 25 independent activists. Participants worked on presenting a one minute statement on why they were an independent. *"The unique voices that independents speak with,"* said Lyons *"are some of the strongest tools we have to grow our movement. And*

while you might think your voice isn't particularly interesting or inspiring, I have to tell you -- you're wrong!! This is great material that we will use in a number of different ways"

Here are excerpts from two of the statements. In the next edition of The Hub, we'll share a few more:

Johnnette Cosby, N. Chesterfield, Virginia : "I am a 46 year-old African American woman. I live in the state of Virginia and we do have open primaries. This current election has really opened my eyes.



I have always considered myself an independent thinker. That's how I address myself: hashtag, "independent thinker." In my household, an African American household, you go with my mom, you go with Democrats. As I've gotten older and especially with Bush Jr.'s election -- the war in Iraq and everything -- it opened my eyes to a lot of corruption, not just on the Republican side, but also on the Democratic side. And I didn't like it. I knew it as all lies, all lies, all lies. But the media was pushing it. That's when I started to become more vocal, calling into *CSPAN*, because I didn't like them saying Blacks only voted for Obama because he was Black. If that were true we would have voted for Al Sharpton. I was also tired of Democrats taking our votes for granted. I have heard that a lot throughout the Black community. They only come around when it's time for an election. I think the parties are keeping us divided as a people. They don't care about us. They care about more power and control and I'm just tired of it."

Al Bell, Peoria, Arizona. In college I was required to write a paper three times a week for this magnificent course on education. In that process, I discovered that I am a basically a "both/and" thinker - not an "either/or" thinker. When I became of voting age, I registered as a Republican because I valued the party of Lincoln. And that worked beautifully for 20 years or more. It finally became clear to me that the "both/and" orientation that was possible as a Republican no longer existed. As a consequence, I decided that I had to become an independent and I chose the opportunity to do so when we moved from California to Arizona. The problem with the political parties is they are so inherently and violently "either/or" that they are missing the main point on almost all the major issues that require our attention. So I'm vehemently an independent.



Profiles in Independence:

Nikki Calhoun, Leroy, New York

Nikki Calhoun became active in politics at the beginning of the Bernie Sanders campaign and has been working for progress ever since. Nikki stopped off at IndependentVoting.org's national headquarters on a recent trip to New York City and met with Vice President of Development, Cathy Stewart and myself.

Says Nikki: "I am a stay-at-home mom and former accounts specialist. I received my bachelor's degree in Political Science from the State University at Brockport. I have always had a love for politics. The idea that the people had the power to decide their own fates waned once I started learning how things actually worked. That is when I decided I could not agree with all the ideas of one party, I was an independent. I was never really active until this past year. Everything I had been yelling at the TV and discussing with friends around campfires was coming into into the spotlight. I was lucky enough to switch to the Democratic Party before our ridiculous early New York deadline and began meeting people from all walks of life during my volunteer time. It was amazing to see communities come together with such strength on a common goal.



Nikki Calhoun

I have always believed that every voice should be heard; that every person's vote should be received and every vote counted. I believe that you shouldn't have groups demand your allegiance

regardless of the moral, ethical and legal outcomes. You should be able to vote for and be led by the best person for the job. We must always be reminded that the government works FOR the people and the proper respect should be shown.

I believe that we can do better. But that it must start with the people. Making our voices heard. It will take time, patience, hard work and dedication...but it can be done."

In the News

- Jackie Salit appeared on " **Fishtank 2016** " to talk with host Lindsay France about independent voters and the presidential election. "Fishtank 2016" is broadcast on the RT Television network. Jackie's appearance picks up at 7:58:00 into the segment.
- Arnold Schwarzenegger wrote an editorial in support of Amendment V, the measure in support of nonpartisan primaries that will appear on the ballot this November. Read "**Schwarzenegger: SD Can Terminate Partisanship**" (*Rapid City Journal*)
- *The Associated Press*/NORC Center for Public Affairs Research **conducted a study** that reported that 90% of voters lack confidence in the country's political system and 70% of voters said they prefer that primaries and caucuses would be open to all voters, regardless of party registration. Neither party is seen as particularly receptive to fresh ideas. Only 17% of the public say the Democratic Party is open to new ideas about dealing with the country's problems; 10% say that about the Republican Party.

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

Give us a call today!

gmandell@independentvoting.org

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