



July 14, 2016

Convention Fever: An Independent's Unconventional Guide to the Democratic & Republican Conventions

160 independents from 40 states joined IndependentVoting.org President Jackie Salit on the recent national conference call to hear her responses to some 80 questions submitted in advance.

Moderated by Tiani Coleman (New Hampshire Independent Voters) and Gwen Mandell (IndependentVoting.org's Director of National Outreach), you can **listen to the complete call here** or zero in on a topic area of interest:

- **Limited voting options - what's our strategy?**
- **The Democratic and Republican conventions:** Is there room for reform?
- **Electoral reform** - how to make our issues stick.
- **How to deal with being constrained by political labeling.**
- **Feeling powerless?**
- **How do we grow the independent movement at this moment?**



An Important Message from Former Presidential Candidate, Dr. Lenora Fulani

In a message solicited by Change.org, former independent presidential candidate Dr. Lenora Fulani asked readers to join her in an effort to lobby the rules committees of the Democratic and Republican National Committees to open the 2020 presidential elections to independent voters, by **signing and circulating the petition** sponsored by Open Primaries. To date, 31,000 people have signed the petition. The petitions will be hand delivered to the committees at the upcoming conventions.

"When I first ran, these process and power issues were considered marginal. Today, they are front page news. Our deeply flawed electoral system produces partisan government, unpopular candidates and frustrated voters. With poverty, income inequality and social injustice affecting so many, we can't wait any longer to fix our political system..."

"At the upcoming party conventions, the rules committees and convention delegates could give every American, regardless of whether they are registered to vote in a party or not, the right to vote in the presidential primaries in 2020. Don't forget, the taxpayers pay for these primaries, yet the parties currently exclude voters at will. Every American revolutionary believes in the principle of "no taxation without representation," and we need to enforce that principle today.

"Please join me in supporting important petitions urging the Democratic Party and the Republican Party to adopt rules requiring open primaries. Those who make the rules rule, and this is an important moment for "We the People" to reshape the presidential primaries and the whole of our electoral process. That process belongs to us!"

[Click here to read full statement and sign the petition.](#)



Why I'm an Independent - Spokesperson Trainees at Work

Recently, 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. *"These are my myth-busting heroes," said Lyons. "The pretense that sustains so much of our failing political process -- that independents are really just Democrats or Republicans in disguise -- crumbles to the ground when we can make ourselves heard. Independents are only getting better at that."*

Here are excerpts from three of those statements.

Peter Taille, Maryland: "I am a recovering liberal. I used to be intoxicated with the idea of being morally comfortable while I accepted functional impotence. I reveled in advocating for change without being empowered to become an agent for change. I overlooked corruption because it claimed to serve the interest of good. I felt like a defender of the disenfranchised while I supported their subdivision into manageable special interest groups. Worst of all I bought the idea that the lack of progress on campaign finance reform, tax code reform, open primaries and gerrymandering was the fault of the anti-liberal opposition. I am finished with groping for honesty in a partisan system where there is no truth. I am independent because labels only stifle openness and effective solutions. I think the American people are beginning to realize they have been abused by the current system and crave bold non-establishment remedies. I hope the independent movement will advocate for daring initiatives both in process and policy. Right now the only word I resent as much as liberal is incremental."



Sue Davies, New Jersey: "I've been an independent since I was 24 years old -- which is about 30 years ago. I grew up in the age of Bella Abzug and Shirley Chisholm and some really fantastic women elected officials. In my early years I wanted to grow up to be the U.S. Senator from the state of New York. I majored in political science in college and I did an internship at Bryn Mawr,



after which point I decided I wanted to have NOTHING to do with electoral politics. I decided my main political contribution would be through organizing in the women, gay rights, and Central American solidarity movements and with labor unions and that would be my political focus. But what I didn't know was that all those things were controlled by the Democratic Party. So even though I didn't want to be part of the Democratic Party, that's who controlled them. I met Dr. Fulani and a number of other people and made a decision that I would become active once again, active in the electoral arena as an independent, and I've been doing that ever since."

Bill Davis, Ohio: "I have never been a straight ticket voter. I was raised in a Republican family. Unfortunately, it took until George W. Bush was in office for me to wake up. At that point, I registered as a Democrat. But from that point I've been following independents. I favor open primaries. I think the two party system is failing us. I do talk to people about independent voting whenever the topic comes up. I'm an avid Bernie supporter. I think it's criminal what the Democratic Party has been doing to hamstring his campaign."



Last week, we featured Al Bell, an activist with Independent Voters for Arizona, in this section. Congratulations Al whose statement, "Why It's Important to Become an Independent," was published by the *Arizona Capitol Times*. See "In the News" below.

Independent Party of Oregon Invites Unaffiliated Voters in Oregon to Participate in Innovative Presidential Primary

Sal Peralta, Secretary of the Independent Party of Oregon, has reached out to IndependentVoting.org to extend an invitation to Oregon's unaffiliated voters to participate in his party's innovative online presidential preference election.

It's estimated that over 26 million Americans were denied the right to vote in the presidential primary elections this year simply because they were registered as independents. We are happy to pass on Sal's invitation (see his note below) and if you live in Oregon, we hope you'll participate.

A Special Message from the Independent Party of Oregon.

Dear Independent Oregonian,

On behalf of the Independent Party of Oregon, I would like to invite you to participate in the Independent Party of Oregon's 2016 presidential preference ballot survey.

Our election will take place online from July 4th -July 18th and is open to all independent (non-affiliated) voters in Oregon as long as you were registered as such by June 24th. It is also open, of course, to our own members who are registered in the Independent Party of Oregon.



[Read the full message from Sal here](#)

Utah League of Independent Voters in the Fourth of July Parade



Dakota Miller in the driver's seat

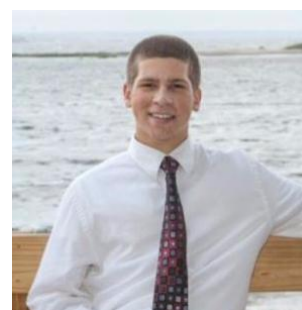


ULIV's PJ Steiner getting ready to join the parade

Profiles in Independence:

Brendan Barbato, Warwick, RI (Currently in School in Wellesley, MA)

At the age of two, I was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes, and it has impacted my daily life considerably. It has taught me to never give up, be strong, and how to overcome adversity - especially when the option of giving up is far easier. I am heading into my senior year at Babson College, where I major in Business Administration with a concentration in Entrepreneurship. Currently, I am working on my venture in San Francisco, where I aim to connect charities and donors through interactive photo contests.



Brendan Barbato

From business to education to healthcare, I have realized how much politics play a role in daily life. My political choices are guided by values and not by political affiliation. In 2014 I voted for a Republican Mayor, Democratic Senator, and an independent for Governor solely based on the fact that they were the best person for the job. It frustrates me how politicians are playing games against each other, rather than doing their job and supporting their constituents.

Our two-party system is broken. Independents represent roughly 45% of voters in the U.S. Yet, every Congressional representative is a Democrat or Republican, with the exception of one independent, Bernie Sanders. The movement to win back our democracy is important to me because the voice is currently not possessed by the people, and Congress is making little to no progress. The decisions that are made by Congress are going to impact my generation and generations to come. Not solving this issue is not only damaging to our current society, but harmful to future generations.

In the News

- Independent Voters of Connecticut founder Gwen Samuel weighs in on the decision by the Congressional Black Caucus to oppose changes to the Democratic Party platform that would allow independents to vote in presidential primaries. [Read her piece in *The Huffington Post*.](#)
- After attending IndependentVoting.org's spokesperson training call, Al Bell, activist in Independents for Arizona, wrote "[Why It's Important to Become an Independent.](#)" (*Arizona Capitol Times*)
- A new op-ed by Open Primaries President John Opdycke in tribute to the late D.C. Circuit Judge Abner J. Mikva who was an outspoken defender of unaffiliated voters' rights throughout his judiciary career. Read "[Abner Mikva's Lesson on Democracy is More Urgent than Ever.](#)" (*The Forward*)



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!](#)

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