



August 13, 2015

## TRUMP'S NON-LOYALTY OATH: THE QUESTION OF INDEPENDENTS

With the first Republican debate in the bag, much is being made of Donald Trump's refusal to commit his support to the Republican nominee. Jackie Salit's new OpEd in *The Huffington Post* speaks to the issue:

*"As much as Donald Trump called "foul" on tough questioning in the Fox debate, including the Big Question about whether everyone was committed to supporting the Republican nominee, from the point of view of independent voters, the questioners weren't nearly tough enough. Or, put another way, independent enough."*

[Read the full opinion piece here.](#)



## Spotlight on the Open Our Democracy Campaign

On July 15, Jackie Salit introduced Congressman John Delaney of Maryland to 170 independent voter activists around the country, via her national conference call, launching IndependentVoting.org's **Open Our Democracy** campaign.

[Listen to the call here.](#)

**Check out the new video** on the campaign's landing page where Jackie answers basic questions about the bill. And while you're on the page...

**Send a letter to your Congressman, asking him or her to sponsor the bill.**

The public relations component for the **Open Our Democracy** campaign took shape on IndependentVoting.org's July 26 spokesperson training call, where Sarah Lyons mobilized the 50 participants to write a letter to the editor, and use the July 15 interview with Rep. Delaney as a springboard for promoting the campaign. Letters have been sent by activists from 11 states. Here are some that have been published so far.



Jackie Salit talks about the Open Our Democracy Act introduced by Rep. John Delaney and the campaign to Open Our Democracy.

- Kentucky independents **Cassia Herron** and **Michael Lewis** had their letter "**Support Bill Give All Voters a Say,**" appear in Kentucky's *Lexington Courier-Journal* on the eve of an annual partisan shindig called the Fancy Farm picnic. The piece calls on members of the Congressional delegation to speak to the issues addressed by the bill;
- **Phil Leech** of Michigan Independent Voters authored a letter that appeared in the *Port Huron Times Herald*, "**Independent Voting Bill Would Break Up Partisan Gridlock;**"
- Natesha Oliver represented Missouri Independents Stand Together (M.I.S.T.) in the *East Missourian* and *The Examiner* in "**Gridlock Reform is Needed;**"
- **Barbara Patrizzi** of Independent Pennsylvanians wrote a letter that was published in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*; while **Jim Lundberg** and **Norma Van Dyke** also had letters in the *Bucks County Courier* and *Philadelphia Weekly-Press*;
- **Jarell Corley** of Orlando, Florida had his letter "**Freeing America From the Grips of Partisanship**" appear in the *Tampa Tribune*; and
- **Kem Todd** of Independent Voters of Oregon penned a letter that appeared in five papers around the state. Read "**Let all voters' voices be heard.**"

To join the **Open Our Democracy** campaign, **click here** or email [national@independentvoting.org](mailto:national@independentvoting.org). If you are interested in writing your own letter to the editor, contact Sarah Lyons at [slyons@cuip.org](mailto:slyons@cuip.org).

## Taking the Open Our Democracy Campaign to the Streets

On Sunday, July 26 a multi-racial team of independents led by Dr. Jessie Fields and Alvaader Frazier kicked off the **Open Our Democracy** campaign at Harlem Week and collected 121 postcards to members of Congress from people across the city.

"Along with Dr. Lenora Fulani, whose presence and passion inspired many, we engaged ordinary people in the activity of opening up American democracy," said Dr. Fields.



(L to R) David Belmont, Richard Kirkpatrick, Juliana Francisco, Dr. Jessie Fields, Dr. Lenora Fulani, Allen Cox, Alvaader Frazier, Tom Williams

Juliana Francisco, who led a petition drive on campuses to lobby Sen.

Schumer to push for top two open primaries in New York, said: "It was really fun to do the Open

*Our Democracy organizing at Harlem Week. People were very responsive and moved when they learned we could have a system in which everyone could vote together in a nonpartisan system." Juliana said people were happy to sign the postcard.*



In Orlando, Florida, Jarell Corley went doorknocking for the Open Our Democracy campaign. He started within his own complex. *" I knocked on 20-25 doors and got 7 signatures, and I got 3 friends to sign. There was a little reluctance from some of my neighbors and some were busy with family....but everyone I encountered was friendly. The last door I knocked on revealed a middle aged couple who invited me into their living room. We sat and spoke about the initiative and politics and they encouraged me to make big moves in whatever I do. This interaction served as additional inspiration for me to continue moving forward with this important work. And the husband gave me his email and phone number to stay in touch!"*

## A Quiet Revolution

Report on The Early Success of California's Top Two Nonpartisan Primary

Jason D. Olson, founder of IndependentVoice.org and Omar H. Ali, Associate Professor at University of North Carolina at Greensboro and leader of North Carolina Independents, have authored a report on the transformative effects of primary reform. The report, which was commissioned by **Open Primaries**, finds that California, as a result of the adoption of Top Two nonpartisan primary elections, now has more competitive elections, increased voter access and a better functioning legislature. [Read the full report here](#) .



The *San Diego Union Tribune* wrote about the report. [Read here](#).

## A Profile in Independence:

Liz Matory, Silver Spring, Maryland

Liz Matory is a DC native and currently a resident of Silver Spring, Maryland. A graduate of Howard University Law School with a Masters in Business Administration, Liz came upon the IndependentVoting.org website when she was exploring the possibility of running for office. A good friend from San Francisco, running under the new Top Two system, urged her to consider becoming an independent. Said Liz, who previously ran for state delegate as a Democrat: *" Once the independence seed was planted in my mind, my awareness grew ."* After listening to IndependentVoting.org's most recent conference call and reading Jackie Salit's book *Independents Rising* , Liz was certain she had found a home.



Liz decided that she would seek the 8th Congressional seat in what has become a very gerrymandered district. *"I have sat in countless meetings listening to explanations, excuses, and lamentations about low voter turnout. Registering more party members is not the answer. And, telling people they should just register with a party is actually an insult. We need to make our democracy more democratic."*

## In the News

Sadie Moore of Cleveland, Ohio represented independents prior to the Republican Party debate by appearing on "FOX Special Report with Bret Baier." Moore made a strong statement about independents' desire to hear candidates talk about reform and to speak broadly to the issues facing the country. [Watch the interview here](#).

A coalition of forces in Florida working to sponsor an initiative for Top Two nonpartisan primaries is gaining momentum and garnering press attention. The "All Voters Vote" Amendment would allow voters to vote in Top Two primary elections for Congress, State Legislature, Governor and Cabinet. Here's a sampling of articles on the campaign:



- The article "Group Proposes Amendment to Open Florida's Primaries to All Voters," from the *Tampa Bay Times*, describes the amendment and quotes Open Primaries' President John Opdycke. [Read here.](#)
- In the *Tallahassee Democrat*, Bill Cottrell opined "If Parties Don't Like 'All Voters Vote,' it must be OK." [Read his piece here.](#)

Duane Pike, one of the founders of Florida Fair and Open Elections and an activist in the IndependentVoting.org network, has been working to promote Top Two nonpartisan primaries in Florida before it was popular. He was interviewed by Lynn Hatter of WFSU about the new proposed amendment in "Push For Open Primary Begins in Florida as NPA & Independent Voters Gain More Clout." [Check out the interview here.](#)

An opinion piece by Jarell Corley was printed this week in the *Ft. Myers News-Press*. Jarell was prompted to write the piece after attending IndependentVoting.org's national conference of independents earlier this year, when Jackie Salit asked panelists to speak about a "political myth they'd like to debunk." [Read Political Myths I'd Like to see Crumble.](#)

## Awake, a song about partisanship

Bangor, Maine activist Joe Pickering once again put his concern about partisanship in the words of a song he wrote. Said Joe: "Like tens of millions of my fellow Americans, I am concerned about our country. So, I felt compelled to write the song AWAKE! Let us all strive to keep our America, our Republic, vibrantly alive!"



## Let's Talk About Choice

In honor of the 50th anniversary of signing the Voting Rights Act, here are highlights from Partnerships for Independent Power, the 2015 National Conference of Independents, focusing on the issue of voting rights and political reform.

“RIGHT NOW, THE VOTERS ARE RELATED TO AS THE  
THING **THAT HAPPENS LAST**  
IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS. WE HAVE TO  
CHANGE THE **DEFINITION**  
**AND THE MEANING OF**  
**WHAT CHOICE IS** – RATHER  
THAN BEING A PASSIVE CONSUMER  
AT THE END OF THE ASSEMBLY LINE –  
**TO BEING AN ACTIVE**  
**CREATOR OF THE**  
**CHOICES THAT ARE**  
**GETTING MADE.”**

- JACQUELINE SALIT



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

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

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