



August 7, 2014

Schumer says: "End Partisan Primaries, Save America."

Independent voters gained an ally in the fight for open primaries. In a *New York Times* Op Ed (7/21) "[End Partisan Primaries, Save America](#)," Senator Chuck Schumer noted: "*Making things worse, in most states, laws prohibit independents - who are not registered with either party and who make up a growing proportion of the electorate - from voting in primaries at all.*" Schumer's call for Top Two Nonpartisan Primaries has generated much discussion on the internet and airwaves about the need for primary reform, including on a show by popular NPR host Diane Rehm, "[Debating the Role of Political Primaries](#)."



Meanwhile, New York City Independence Party is circulating an [open letter welcoming Senator Schumer](#) to the movement for nonpartisan primary reform and asking him to take the lead in his home state of New York where over three million unaffiliated and minor party members are denied the right to vote in primaries.

New App for Independent Voters Targets Arizona Top Two campaign

Arizonans can now download an app devoted to independent voters. The app was designed by Sanjay Srinivasan for the [Open Nonpartisan Elections Committee](#) to educate independents about their voting rights and garner support for the 2016 ballot measure that will ask Arizona voters if they want to abolish the existing partisan primary system and replace it with an open primary system. [Paul Johnson](#), chairman of the Arizona open primary effort, commissioned Srinivasan to create the app. [Read the full story in the Arizona Republic and download the app here.](#)



Paul Johnson with Jackie Salit and Cathy Stewart at recent NYC Independence Party Spring Chair event honoring founders of IndependentVoting.org.

New Mexico Secretary of State Refuses to Defend Closed Primaries, Attorney General Intervenes

A lawsuit aimed at challenging the constitutionality of New Mexico's closed primaries is causing quite a stir. Secretary of State Dianna Duran responded to the lawsuit filed by **J. Edward Hollington** on behalf of "Declined to State" Voters by refusing to defend the constitutionality of the law that prohibits independent voters from voting in the primaries. Attorney General Gary King, in turn, filed a motion to intervene in the lawsuit to keep primaries closed. Said **Tisha Le Rose**, founder of **Independent Voters of New Mexico**, who posted a petition on **Moveon.org for Top Two Nonpartisan Primaries** that garnered considerable attention, "*I'm quite pleased with the attention that the lawsuit has caused. There is now an important conversation about the inequities of our process going on, and that's critical to making a change.*"

David G. Crum, plaintiff in Hollington's suit urged independent voters to contact the Office of the Attorney General to express their support for the right to vote in state primary elections. Le Rose and activists in the IndependentVoting.org network are doing just that. Read a **KRWG TV piece here** and an editorial in the **Farmington Times**. And if you are an independent voter in New Mexico or have friends or family in the state, please make sure to add your voice to this important fight.



Attorney Ed Hollington talks about the open primary suit on radio

Voting Rights Are Primary

Updates from Missouri and Michigan

Natesha Oliver, founder of **Missouri Independents Stand Together** (MIST) surveyed voters on primary day, August 5 in Kansas City, Missouri. She said: *"It was the first time that I had done anything like this, and I was a little nervous, but I was comfortable in what I was doing and that eased the fear."*

Editorial boards for the **St. Louis Dispatch** and the **Springfield News-Leader** advocated for a top two nonpartisan primary system.

Meanwhile, in **Michigan**, Spring Lake community leader **Phil Leech** had his editorial "State Should Modify Party System," published in *The Lansing State Journal*, prior to Michigan's August 5 primary.

[Read the editorial here.](#)



Independent Leaders Making News

New Hampshire

Tiani Coleman of **New Hampshire Independent Voters** was a guest speaker at the 2014 Porcupine Freedom Festival in Lancaster, New Hampshire. Her presentation, "*Opening Up the Electoral Process*," shed light on the flaws in our current two party electoral system...and how the absence of a real voice to independents, minority parties, and less active partisans renders the general elections meaningless. Tiani encouraged the attendees to work with people across the ideological spectrum to help create a more vibrant, open election system, such as nonpartisan primaries, to allow for better dialogue, more competition, choice and engagement. She spoke to numerous people after the presentation, handed out fliers, and got a positive reception. Said Tiani, "*The New Hampshire*



Tiani Coleman

Independent Voters intend to focus our activities on helping people better see how a less partisan, more independent mindset is what will ultimately help us see each other's perspectives and solve the big issues of our day."

Ohio

In an *Elyria Chronicle Telegram* editorial "Changing Primary Structure Would Enfranchise Independents," Lorrain County resident and **Independent Ohio** activist **Susan Doup** asserts that 'it's time for Ohio to move toward an election process that's inclusive of thousands of disenfranchised voters,' by enacting Top Two Nonpartisan Primaries. Doup and Independent Ohio are organizing a panel discussion **October 10 at Oberlin College** entitled "Moving Beyond Partisanship." **Read Doup's editorial here** and contact **sddoup@zoominternet.net** for more about the October event.



Sue Doup

Colorado

Gwen Ballard, leader of **Coalition of Independent Voters in Colorado** (CIVIC), was interviewed for a Denver blog, "Westword." In the piece, "**Election Activists Have Problems with Current Primary System**," she spoke about the plight of independent voters: "We are first-class taxpayers, but second-class voters," and pointed out that "*in order to exercise my right to participate in the political process, I must give up my right 'not to associate.'*" Ballard said that she hoped Colorado would follow Oregon which just put a Top Two Nonpartisan initiative on the ballot this year. If you are interested in joining CIVIC, email Gwen at **giballard@q.com**.



Gwen Ballard

South Dakota

Kim Wright, founder of **The South Dakota Independent Voice** organized two events on Saturday, August 2 for voters to meet Independent U.S. Senate candidate **Larry Pressler**. Kim's mother, **Erma Ames**, hosted the first event in Tulare where Pressler spoke about his vision and Kim shared the work of South Dakota Independent Voice and the challenges independents face. Erma, 79, had never been politically active before this event. Erma and friends her age were planning to boycott the election and not vote for the first time in their lives. Now they're changing their voter registration to independent.



Update on NJ Endpartisanship Suit

Secretary of State says Join A Party

The Secretary of State in New Jersey submitted a reply July 28 to the **EndPartisanship** suit filed earlier this year. The suit argues that the state's closed partisan primary system violates an individual's right to vote because: (1) the primary conditions a voter's right to participate on giving up their right to not join a private political party, (2) the partisan primary effectively dilutes the voting power of non-party voters, and (3) the system violates New Jersey's own constitutional prohibition against the private use of taxpayer funds. Secretary of State Guadagno insults the 47 percent of New Jersey voters who have chosen not to affiliate with a party when she asserts that "...a voter who feels disenfranchised because of a regulation that conditions participation in primary elections on party membership 'should simply join the party.'"



[Read more here.](#)

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