



September 29, 2016

National Conference Call - Your Questions Answered

210 independents from 42 states participated in IndependentVoting.org's national conference call on September 20. President Jackie Salit responded to a composite of over 100 questions sent in by independents. Questions about how to best use our votes during the election; the possibility of an independent candidate emerging; how to build coalitions; the issue of party vs. movement and much more.

" The most significant opportunity to make our voices heard lies in the total votes cast for independent presidential candidates," said Salit.



Comparing the current voter rebellion to the coming together of diverse forces that occurred in the 1990s during Ross Perot's campaigns, Salit said: " We are now poised, based on what that independent vote is going to be, to launch yet another phase of coming together, of building tools for the independent empowerment of this country, to challenge the political establishment, but with all the experience and the lessons learned from the 1990s ."

[Listen to the complete conference call here.](#)

Don't miss the post-election conference call with Jackie Salit on Sunday, November 13th at 4 pm ET.

"What Just Happened?: Is America Going Independent?"

Submit your questions after the polls close on November 8

Sunday, November 13 4pm ET

[Register for the call here](#)

Amendment V in South Dakota Picks up Key Endorsements. AARP and League of Women Voters Lend Support to Non-Partisan Elections

Representatives of AARP and the League of Women Voters of South Dakota joined Rick Knobe (center) at a press conference September 13th to announce their endorsement of Amendment V, the ballot measure to enact a nonpartisan public primary system that, if passed, will allow all voters to participate in every round of elections.

"Amendment V gives every voter, including the 115,000 independents like me, a voice and allows us to start electing public servants instead of party servants," said Knobe, Chair of the **Amendment V for Nonpartisan Elections** Committee and **South Dakota Voice of Independents**.

AARP South Dakota State Director Erik Gaikowski

added, "Passing Amendment V will provide a benefit that, in reality, is a fundamental American right - the ability to fully participate in our elections. Passing Amendment V will give more than 115,000 South Dakota Independents equal access to the electoral process."

League of Women Voters Spokesperson Amy Scott Stoltz continued: "Our core focus is ensuring all South Dakotans have a direct voice in choosing their elected representatives. Amendment V - Nonpartisan Elections gives every South Dakota voter that voice."

[Check out the video](#) of the press conference and coverage in [The Argus Leader](#).



Click on photo to view video

Independents Call on Colorado Governor to Defend Democracy in Colorado

Gwen Ballard, the founder of CIVIC (Coalition of Independent Voters in Colorado) and **Jackie Salit** (President of IndependentVoting.org) co-authored a letter to Governor John Hickenlooper of Colorado which was picked up by the **Grand Junction Sentinel**, urging him to oppose the move by the Colorado legislature to rewrite voter guide descriptions of initiatives 98 and 140. These initiatives would open access to the ballot to unaffiliated voters and Hickenlooper is on record as supporting them.

"Since the voter guide offers descriptions of the ballot questions, it is obviously crucial that the descriptions be crafted in a nonpartisan manner. The original language proposed by the Council staff was fair, factual and understandable to voters. The new language gives a highly partisan, biased and misleading description of the measures. Put simply, Initiative 98 allows unaffiliated voters to participate in state and local political party primaries by assuring their receipt of



Gwen Ballard

mail ballots, currently guaranteed only to Republicans and Democrats. Initiative 140 establishes presidential primaries that are open to all voters. Both measures would allow the more than one million unaffiliated voters in Colorado-nearly 38% of the electorate- to fully participate in the democratic process."

[Read the full letter here.](#)

Presidential Debate Yields Strong Response from Independents

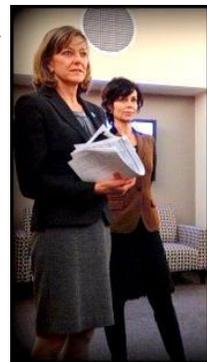
Independent activists had a lot to say after watching the first General Election Presidential Debate between Trump and Clinton. Here are just a few comments.

Natesha Oliver, founder of M.I.S.T. (Missouri Independents Stand Together): Tonight's debate shows that this two party system does not give people like me a choice in selecting officials that give me confidence in a progressive and safe America. There are other candidates in this race who should have been allowed to participate. Yeah, one may have been "better" at answering questions than the other; yet could I honestly say either candidate will be a leader I would or could support? No, I can't and that bothers me, because I am an American and I am tired of watching elected officials elevate their life while average Americans piece their lives together from the problematic policies they gridlock and debate about while feeding us the same old lies and excuses. We should not have to settle for who will lead us. What's the point of voting at all if in the end we are forced to accept less than ideal officials? I'm going to vote, yet it is way past the time for our government to heed the voice of the people - all the people - and that includes the 43% that choose to not participate in a party.



Matthew James, Winston-Salem, NC: By far one of the most horrendous debates ever seen. It's our American responsibility to our country to change the process of elections. Organize locally, develop grassroots coalitions, and vote for third parties (I recommend Green) to create ongoing opportunities to include more voices in our nation. Never should two rich, white, war-mongering, racist, neoliberals be America's only options.

Sarah Lyons, Communications Director, IndependentVoting.org: This election should make it harder for the "spoiler" label to stick to independent voters because the two parties have done such a magnificent job of displaying how they are spoiling our democracy. Witness the much touted "debate" among two who were crowned as their party's nominee; the culmination of billions of dollars, untold man hours, the full force of the media, all the state's election apparatus at full production capacity. What did it yield? Two of the most unpopular candidates in recent history, elected with a mere 14% of the vote, who stood on stage and had nothing new to say to the American people. Independents need to speak out about who the real spoilers are in our democracy.



Rick Robol, Chair of Independent Ohio, and Member of IndependentVoting.org's Election Reform Committee -



What a disappointment that neither candidate said a word about how to fix the rigged political and electoral systems in our nation. In fact, one of them has not even acknowledged that the systems are rigged. It makes me sad.

Karl Scudder, Portland, OR - My greatest impression from the debate was how little was said. Both candidates talked alot, but they didn't say much. You expect that to a degree in political debates, but last night seemed exceptional. This election is less about policy, and more about character: we are trying to figure out who is the less despicable candidate. That seems unique to me. In my lifetime, I've never witnessed an election where nearly everyone I know dislikes both candidates equally. My hope is that this will be a nationwide shock to our political system. Even if we don't have a commander-in-chief we can get behind, perhaps this could be an opportunity for long term political change. The



independent movement has never been stronger and Republicans and Democrats have never been more disenchanted with their candidates. It is not very satisfying in the short-term, but it could be progress in the direction we are trying to go.

Profiles in Independence:

Stephanie Harris, Brooklyn, NY

Stephanie Harris is a valuable member of IndependentVoting.org's phone outreach team and has been calling supporters of political reform (many of whom signed IndependentVoting.org's Open Our Democracy letter, met us on Facebook or found IndependentVoting.org's website) and asking them to become members of IndependentVoting.org. Here's what Stephanie has to say about her political journey:

"I grew up in Newark, New Jersey. As long as I can remember, my family always voted Democrat - so I followed family tradition and became a Democrat. As I became older and started to understand the weight of the political system on our lives, I took a more objective approach.

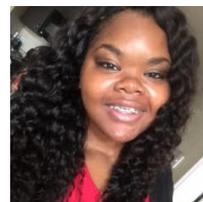


When I first joined the phone team at the national IndependentVoting.org office, I didn't know the intimate details of the political system - how unequal and unfair it is - but I was awakened like a zombie from her sleep when we began a campaign for opening the primaries. In my decision to first become independent-minded and ultimately, an independent, I learned about the tight grip the two party system had on our democracy and people's minds. It's almost as if it took Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton to make people realize that we need a change. Being at IndependentVoting.org has taught me to question things - why, if I think outside the box, it's not accepted or if I'm not a Democrat or Republican, it's a no-go. It has come to a point where no one I know cares to vote, and if they do, they are choosing the lesser of two evils. Now I understand why our movement is viewed as a threat, because if strong enough, we could obliterate this two party system and uncover why it's broken.

When I'm membershiping, I speak with independents from all walks of life. I talk to independents who have been independent since they registered to vote and some who just started their journey because they couldn't connect with either party anymore. I speak with grandmothers, and grandfathers, mothers and fathers, businessmen and babysitters. These people see the seriousness of what this political structure has done to our nation. I believe they become members because they see it's not going to fly anymore and we need immediate changes. And if that means no more being told what to do by the donkeys and elephants, that's what they're going to do. I think it's a beautiful thing.

In the News

- **Mariah Hunt**, independent from North Carolina was interviewed as part of a panel of North Carolina voters for the **CBS national pre-debate coverage**. Said Mariah of her experience: *"Things were taken out that I stated regarding my political views and how I was researching all the candidates, even the ones the media is not representing. They just stated that I was undecided. But I had an amazing experience. I like that I was able to have a conversation with people who had different and similar viewpoints as me. Even the things that were edited out influenced the people I was around that day. It allowed them to question 'Do I have to choose the lesser of two evils or can I find a candidate that is actually up for this important position.'"*
- Check out the **the new commercial from Let Colorado Vote**.
- Read Open Primaries Director John Opdycke's op ed "**Colorado Primary Reform: The Fix is In**" (*Newsweek*).



Mariah Hunt



John Opdycke

Politics for the People Book Club: Poverty and Profit in the American City

Poverty and Profit in the American City is the current reading selection of the **Politics for the People Book Club**. It is an in-depth look at the housing and eviction crisis in America. **Matthew Desmond**, a MacArthur Fellow and Harvard sociologist, asks us to look more closely at eviction, not simply as a symptom of poverty, but as a cause. We meet both families and landlords in *EVICTED*. The book tells the stories of eight different families who face eviction whom Matthew came to know over the close to one year he spent living in the poor communities of Milwaukee. In addition to his exhaustive field work, Matthew also examined housing court records, 911 calls and developed the Milwaukee Area Renters Survey that collected in-person questionnaires from over 1000 families.



Matt Desmond

Here is a video Matthew created about the book, in which he says,

" If we want to erase poverty in America, we must do something about the stark lack of affordable housing in our cities, because without stable shelter, everything else falls apart."

Join the **Politics for the People Book Club** founder **Cathy Stewart** and **Matthew Desmond** on a conference call **October 23**
Find out more and get updates on the **Politics for the People** blog

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!

And help expand additional outreach on social media by making a donation to our advertising campaign. Every \$100 you give allows us to engage 4,500 people with our message on Facebook. **Please Donate here** . Thanks for your generous support!

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