

## **MISSOURI INDEPENDENTS STANDING TOGETHER (“MIST”)**

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### **Missouri Independents to Protest on Primary Day: “Voting Rights Are Primary” Campaign Highlights Partisan Bias In Election Design**

Missouri Independents Standing Together (“MIST”), a state based association representing Independent voters, will conduct a primary day informational picket in the Kansas City downtown area at 12<sup>th</sup> and Locust on August 5, 2014 at 11:00am to protest the barriers that prevent independents from full participation in primary elections and to heighten public awareness.

Missouri primaries do not allow independent voters to exercise their desire to support the best candidate regardless of party affiliation. Independents are forced instead to first choose a party ballot if they want to participate. This and other exclusions of independents from partisan primaries are increasingly coming under fire.

Dubbed “Voting Rights Are Primary,” the effort is part of a campaign which is nationally coordinated by IndependentVoting.org and aims to dramatize the latest Gallup poll showing 42% of Americans are independent yet are barred or restricted in nearly every state from full process and often the most competitive.

The effort kicked off with the May 6 primaries in Ohio and North Carolina and have continued with protests in Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Nevada, Maryland, New York, Utah and New Jersey. Independents have held informational pickets in front of the Secretary of State offices, at polling sites and on street corners, carrying signs which read “I Can’t Vote Today. Ask Me Why” and “First Class Taxpayer, Second Class Voter” while conducting surveys to measure public awareness about independents’ voting rights, collecting signatures on petitions, visiting legislators and speaking with the media.

“Each political party is focused on trying to close the deal and take control on Congress,” said IndependentVoting.org President Jacqueline Salit. “Independent voters don’t want to close the deal, they want to open the primaries. The midterm elections are not just about who goes to Washington. They’re about who sends them there.”

In April, a lawsuit was brought in U.S. Federal Court in New Jersey by the End Partisanship coalition on behalf of eight New Jersey voters, IndependentVoting.org and The Independent Voter Project. The suit is challenging state funding of closed primaries and demanding that every

voter should have an equal and meaningful vote at every stage of the state-funded election process. Independent voters nationally are watching the case closely.

A sample of media coverage of the movement for nonpartisan open primaries provided below.

- [Independent Voters Excluded from Upcoming Elections](#) (*KOB TV - New Mexico*)
- [Voters Pay for Primaries but Don't Get a Say](#) (*Meadville Tribune - Pennsylvania*)
- [Independent Voters Protest Voting Restrictions](#) (*WSYX TV - Ohio*)
- [Organizer Ready to Try again for Open Primaries](#) (*Daily Sun - Arizona*)
- [Independents Sue to Overhaul New Jersey Primary System](#)  
(*Morristown Green - New Jersey*)
- [Independent Voter Group Challenges Democrat's Closed Primary Suit](#) (*AP - Hawaii*)
- [Independent Voter's Plan Lawsuit Over Closed Primary Elections](#)  
(*KOB TV - New Mexico*)
- [Group banned from voting to highlight unfair election practices](#)  
(*Philadelphia Weekly - Pennsylvania*)

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