



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **IN MID-TERM ELECTIONS INDEPENDENT VOTER GROUPS TO PICKET ON PRIMARY DAY**

**“VOTING RIGHTS ARE PRIMARY”**

**OHIO AND N. CAROLINA GROUPS  
KICK OFF EFFORTS MAY 6TH**

**42% OF ELECTORATE IS INDEPENDENT YET  
MOST STATES BAR/RESTRICT INDY VOTING RIGHTS**

New York, NY—IndependentVoting.org, an association of independent voters with organizations in 40 states, is conducting nationally coordinated informational pickets on primary day to protest that 42% of Americans are independent yet are barred or restricted in nearly every state from full participation in the primary process. Primary elections are a critical juncture in the democratic process and often the most competitive.

Seventeen states bar independents from voting in primary elections although they are the fastest growing segment of the electorate and in 10 states outnumber Democrat and Republican voters.

“Each political party is 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.”

Over 13 million voters will be ineligible to cast ballots in the first round of the mid-term elections because of their independent / unaffiliated status. Millions more will have to join a political party at their polling site in order to receive a ballot or will receive an abridged ballot containing the candidates of only one party. Independents are unified by a desire for nonpartisan governance and seek to support the best candidate, not a party.

Kicking off the effort on the May 6<sup>th</sup> primary day are independents from Columbus, Ohio and Greensboro, North Carolina. Ohio independents will protest at the Secretary of State office from 10:00 am – 1:00 pm while Greensboro independents will be visiting polls sites and the

downtown area including at 4:00 pm, Elm Street -- site of Woolworths (now the International Civil Rights Museum) where the sit-in movement was launched across the south in 1960.

Political parties have argued they are private associations and have a First Amendment right to determine who may join or participate in their organization. A new wave of litigation aiming to protect the voting rights of independents has been mounted in which state funding for the elections of private organizations has been challenged.

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## ***Voting Rights are Primary***

INDEPENDENTVOTING.ORG

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### **FACT SHEET**

- **In 10 state there are more registered independents, than Democrats or Republicans.**
  - Alaska, Arizona, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Maine, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Rhode Island.
- **17 states hold closed primaries in which independent / unaffiliated are not allowed to vote.** The percentage of the state's electorate which is independent is indicated:
  - Connecticut, Delaware, DC, Florida, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Maryland; Nebraska; Nevada, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, Utah.
- **8 states hold semi-closed primaries** in which independents must register into a party at the polls in order to receive a ballot. Parties can elect to bar independents from voting. State require a re-registration process to regain independent status. Some states require a waiting period to re-register.
  - Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, West Virginia, Wyoming.
- **4 states hold semi-open primaries.** Independent and unaffiliated voter must ask for a party ballot and can only vote for candidates of a single party. Parties can elect to bar independents from participation.
  - Alaska, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Rhode Island
- **19 states hold open primaries in which there is no party registration.** Voters must choose a party primary in which to vote and cannot split their ticket among candidates with different partisan affiliations.
  - Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, North Dakota, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Vermont, Virginia, Wisconsin

- **3 states hold a Top Two form of open primary.** All voter can participate in the primary and vote for any candidate regardless of their party affiliation. Top two vote getters go on to the general election.
  - California, Louisiana, Washington

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