



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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INDEPENDENT VOTERS TO PICKET ON PRIMARY DAY IN NEW JERSEY

“VOTING RIGHTS ARE PRIMARY”

47% OF NJ ELECTORATE IS INDEPENDENT YET STATE REQUIRES VOTERS TO JOIN PARTY IN ORDER TO VOTE

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Independent voters, who comprise 47% of the New Jersey electorate, will conduct informational pickets on June 3rd, Primary Day, to protest the barriers which prevent them full and equal participation in the primary election. Independents will be protesting at:

- 12:00 to 1:00 pm - Pier Village in Long Branch under the Pergola
- 6:00 to 7:00 pm - Grove St station in downtown Jersey City
- 3:30 to 5:00 pm - Bridge Plaza in Ft. Lee

New Jersey independents are not allowed to vote as independents and must first register into a party in order to cast a ballot. With low voter turnout expected in tomorrow's primary, and 2.6 million New Jersey voters excluded from the process, independents will address the partisan design of the primaries as a voting rights issue.

In April, a lawsuit was brought in U.S. Federal Court in Newark 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. Independents voters nationally are watching the case closely.

Dubbed “Voting Rights are Primary” the campaign 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 participation in the primary process. Primary elections are a critical juncture in the democratic process and often the most competitive.

The effort kicked off with the May 6 primaries in Ohio and North Carolina and continued with protests in Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Nevada. 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.

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

“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.”

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