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RHODE ISLAND INDEPENDENTS RESPOND TO VOTER SURVEY;

WEIGH IN ON GOP EFFORTS TO CLOSE PRIMARIES, MA ELECTION, PARTISANSHIP AND POLITICAL REFORM

New York, NY—IndependentVoting.org, a national organization of independent voters, conducted a survey among Rhode Island independents from January 23rd – 24th. More than 100 independents took the survey after receiving a call from the national headquarters of IndependentVoting.org in New York City.

“Independents are getting organized,” said Steve DeCollibus, a North Kingstown resident and spokesperson for IndependentVoting.org’s Rhode Island network.

Currently 48% of Rhode Island voters are registered as unaffiliated or independent.

The 7 part survey probed independent’s attitudes about the political process, the major parties, the role of independents in a reform movement and reactions to the recent Massachusetts election. Nearly all of the respondents (97%) had voted in a party primary previously.

The survey included the statement “Partisanship has taken over the political process and political parties are responsible. Independents have to lead a reform movement to change the way politics are structured.” 76% of Rhode Island independents agreed with the statement.

Respondents also weighed in strongly in support of open primaries with 97% backing the issue. Seventy-five people who participated in the survey signed onto an open letter addressing the GOP’s recent efforts to close their primaries to independents. The letter, which will be submitted to newspapers throughout Rhode Island for publication, states:

Republican Party leaders have declared that they intend to close the primaries in Rhode Island. We, independent voters of the state, believe that this would be a big mistake and an infringement on independents’ democratic right to participate at all levels of the election process. In Rhode Island, 48% of voters are registered as unaffiliated or independent, more than in either of the major parties.

The American people have made plain that we want to end partisanship so that government can govern in the interests of what’s best for our country, not a party. We believe that democracy and fairness are key to citizen participation and open government.

Allowing independents to vote in the primaries is good for democracy.

The survey also probed independent’s reactions to the recent election in Massachusetts resulting in half of respondents stating that the Democratic Party lost the recent election in MA because they ignored independents.