



March 2, 2017

Are You at a Crossroads?

National Conference of Independents Two Weeks Away!

IndependentVoting.org's 9th biennial national conference is just around the corner. It is entitled "**Crossroads for An Independent America**," and an exciting program is in store for the 400 person audience who will be attending.

The conference will be held Saturday, March 18 in the Proshansky Auditorium at the City University of New York's Graduate Center in New York City. Registration opens at 10:30 am and the conference begins at 11:30 am.

Highlights include:

- IndependentVoting.org's President Jackie Salit speaking on how independents are a restless engine for reform;
- Dr. Lenora Fulani on the relationship between poverty and democracy;
- A live focus group conducted by Thom Reilly, Director, Arizona State University Morrison Institute for Public Policy and Cathy Stewart, Vice President for National Development for IndependentVoting.org;

- Noted leaders such as: Daniel Ortega, Board of Directors, Cesar Chavez Foundation and Chairman of the Board, National Council of La Raza; Michael Hardy, General Counsel, National Action Network; and Doug Schoen, pollster, political analyst, author and commentator;
- Participation and statements by activists from all across the country.

The room is filling up, but there are still a few seats remaining!

[Click here to register for the conference](#)



THE 9TH BIENNIAL
National Conference
of Independents
SATURDAY, MARCH 18, 2017

JOIN US AT THE PROSHANSKY AUDITORIUM
CUNY GRADUATE CENTER
365 5TH AVE, NEW YORK, NY 10016
BETWEEN 34TH & 35TH ST.

CONFERENCE IS FREE, BUT YOU MUST REGISTER IN ADVANCE TO ATTEND.

REGISTER AT:
WWW.CONFERENCEOFINDEPENDENTS.ORG

CONTACT: 800-288-3201 OR
NATIONAL@INDEPENDENTVOTING.ORG
FOR MORE INFORMATION

independentvoting.org

National Conference of Independents: Why I'm Coming to the Conference

Hundreds of Independents head to New York City on March 18th.
Here are statements from two indies who are coming:

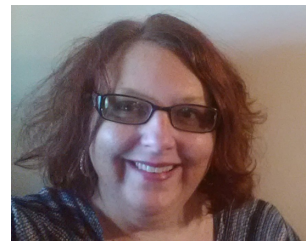
Al Bell, Peoria, AZ - This will be my first IndependentVoting.org conference. As Americans and as independents, we now face unprecedented challenges - and opportunities. So, I decided to do a little preparing, rather than just showing up. I invite you to consider the idea, too.

It involves mainly "priming" my brain to prompt me to listen actively and take away insights that I can use to stimulate others to join in our cause. That's the intent. The tool is Jackie Salit's book, *Independents Rising*.

I read this intriguing book when it first came out and posted an Amazon review. When I stumbled on that review recently, I decided to follow my own advice: read the book-again. I wanted a refresher on how we got to this point in our movement. Only a few pages into this "second time around," I am finding ideas that will make me a better listener at the conference and ambassador for our cause afterward. Jackie's lively prose reminds me - again - who independents are. It's a simple foundation for the conference. Check it out. I think you'll find it rewarding.



Juli Dominguez, Ft. Wayne, IN - I am independent because the issues grab my attention, ignite my passion and earn my vote. Although I have never been one that likes being labeled and I prefer to think for myself, I enjoy working with others. Therefore, I am super excited about the opportunity to build **Independent Voices of Indiana**. Now, more than ever, it is time for independents to have a seat at democracy's table and to let their collective voices be heard. I look forward to attending the upcoming conference in New York City so that I can connect with other independents and I can learn how to be an effective leader in my community.



Bills, Bills, Bills - Updates on efforts to open and close primaries

New Hampshire

Members of the New Hampshire House Election Law Committee soundly rejected, in a 20-0 vote, an attempt to close New Hampshire's primaries to independent voters. Representative Norman Silber's bill, HB642 would have instituted a series of restrictions on voting and voter choice including abandoning same day voter registration and placing burdens on student voting.



"Independent voters in New Hampshire have a long tradition of voting in primaries, which puts us at a higher voter participation rate than other closed primary states. Voting rights should be expanded, not contracted," said Tiani Coleman, President of New Hampshire Independent Voters. "New Hampshire independents aren't straight ticket voters and don't want to be confined to a box, but we should still get as much say as any other voter in each part of our public election process. We're grateful that the New Hampshire legislature sees the integral role independents have in choosing candidates for the final ballot, and we look forward to continuing improved voter access for everyone in our state."

New Mexico

A proposal to open New Mexico's primary elections to independent voters made it out of the Senate Rules Committee and now heads to the Senate Judiciary Committee, potentially its last stop before reaching the Senate floor. A similar proposal, meanwhile, is also advancing through the House, having passed one committee and awaiting a hearing in the second before it gets to the House floor. Senate Bill 205, sponsored by Sen. John Sapien of Corrales, would allow independents (called "Declined to State" in New Mexico) to participate in primary elections. Led by its founder, Bob Perls, members of New Mexico Open Primaries (NMOP) have applied pressure by attending hearings, testifying and launching a creative social media campaign in support of the bill.



"It has been deeply gratifying to see the great support from New Mexico legislators so far this legislative session," said Perls. "The grassroots education NMOP has executed over the last two years has paid off and the 2016 national election provided fertile ground for activists across the whole political spectrum to weigh in, get involved, show their frustration then re-engage on important political issues like open primaries. The time is right and the time is now to have great success with the open primaries agenda."

Nevada

Senator James Settelmeyer of Minden has a bill that would give all Nevada voters a greater voice in shaping the temperament and tone of future campaigns. The bill would essentially allow for nonpartisan open primaries so that all candidates running for office could be voted on by everyone, regardless of registration. The top two finishers in the primary would go on to the General Election, regardless of party. The League of Women Voters have endorsed this top two bill and Independent Voters of Nevada will be lobbying for its passage.

Bills to close primaries or institute partisan registration have been introduced in Missouri, Texas, Tennessee and North Carolina and efforts to defeat these bills are underway.

Independents United for Progress Meets in Connecticut

Independents United for Progress, a new group formed by Charlotte Scot, held its first meeting in Old Lyme, Connecticut, getting off to a great start. Scot is a former Communications Director for the DNC and a leader of Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign in Connecticut.

Attended by people from a variety of political locations - Charlotte commented that they included a member of the Green Party and a former Republican state representative who supported open primaries - discussion focused on the issues of open primaries and campaign finance reform.



"The people who attended the meeting were definitely FIRED UP and FED UP with the present political system," said Charlotte. "They want election reform, campaign finance reform and a system which allows the plurality of voters (registered independents and unaffiliated voters) to have access to primaries."

In announcing the meeting, Scot said of independents, "We are 800,000 strong."

There are more of us than Democrats. There are more of us than Republicans. We are independents and unaffiliated voters and we now have the plurality in most every town and city in Connecticut. This makes some wonder why the duopoly (Democrats and Republicans) is still controlling the election process."

Profiles in Independence:

Kristen Kiernan, Jacksonville, FL

I met Kristen Kiernan this past year at the Take Back Democracy March in Washington, D.C. Kristin worked on Bernie Sanders' and Jill Stein's campaigns and joined IndependentVoting.org. Kristen and Leigh Ann Gustavus will be traveling to New York from Jacksonville for IndependentVoting.org's National Conference of Independents.



"From a young age I was fortunate to have never ending support from my parents. They provided me the opportunity to be active within my community through Church and youth group, along with community theater, various after-school programs and local community outreach. Growing up I was always a Democrat. I was a member of the young Democrats in high school. I was never really outspoken about politics until my dad approached me about the Bernie Sanders campaign. The Bernie Sanders campaign got me off my butt to talk about changes. I had never given to a campaign before Bernie. I had never gone to the Democratic Convention nor even thought about it. This last campaign season got me motivated enough to jump in my car and drive from Florida to Philadelphia. My father and I took a week off and went up to the DNC, without knowing what we were getting into. We camped out, protested and made amazing lifelong connections with people. During this time I decided it was very important to speak with as many people as possible about current events. I reached out to people, people randomly reached out to me and we would ask each other questions to form our own opinions. That got me thinking about what it is that I stand for and what I believe in. That is the reason why I started talking about current events with my friends and acquaintances. I started by letting people speak and thoroughly listening to their opinions. At first it was a casual thing, I would just bring it up in conversation. It finally got to the point that I started printing things out and giving them to my friends. Often my friends and I have BBQ's on the weekends so I started bringing up conversations and letting people form an opinion without my influence. I am reluctant to say that I did very much for the Bernie Sanders campaign. I don't feel as if I did anything in retrospect, I feel that I was merely a tiny speck of dirt in the midst of an entire landfill. A knock on a door, a sign on the side of the road or a trip to Philadelphia are all quite minuscule compared to the problems at hand."

I am genuinely eager to explore options and learn more about possible changes for our political process and ready to begin promoting and implementing new ideas. Bringing our communities together we can create good deeds and thriving families/households. Our communities require brave leaders. Progress is uncomfortable and will continue to be until we look at each issue objectively and form cohesive solutions. My father told me "If our country would just hold each other and ourselves personally accountable for our own actions it would cut out a lot of the petty crime, theft and greed." That got me thinking, he may just be onto something. What if an average Joe like me made a stand for something better?

I'm looking forward to attending the Independent Voting conference March 18 to meet other independents and talk about next steps in the fight for democracy."

In the News

- "**Bill Would Make Elections More Fair**," an editorial by Randi Thomson (*Reno Journal-Gazette*).
- "**Time to End Closed Primaries in Nevada**," an editorial by Doug Goodman (*Nevada Independent*)
- "**Open Primary Moves Forward in Senate**" (*Albuquerque Journal*)
- ATTN Published two videos featuring Arnold Schwarzenegger. " Both parties are incredibly skilled at screwing over the voters and keeping them in the dark about their trickery," Schwarzenegger said in the **first video**. In speaking about redistricting in the **second video**, Schwarzenegger said "Our Congress is less popular than herpes."
- Open Primaries President John Opdycke was interviewed with **Boston Herald Radio** , and spoke about how critical political reform is in America today.

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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Give us a call today!

gmandell@independentvoting.org