



March 30, 2017

## Crossroads For an Independent America

On Saturday, March 18, 2017, Independent Voting held its Ninth Biennial National Conference of Independents. **"Crossroads for an Independent America"** brought together over 350 independent activists from 36 states for a vigorous dialogue on the state of our democracy and the creation of a new political culture.



In her **keynote address**, Jacqueline Salit remarked:

*One of the things that more and more Americans are now able to see is*

*that the inability of our political process as currently constituted, the inability to deliver a prosperous and creative and happy and safe life to the American people means that we now, as a movement, and as a country, have to turn our attention to the process itself. This is no longer a side issue, it's no longer an auxiliary concern...*

- PRINT: Please contact us if you would like to receive a printed version of Salit's keynote -- ***Things Fall Apart: Building a Unifying Independent Movement*** -- via mail. You can find a **downloadable version here**.
- VIDEO: You can watch the complete conference proceedings **here**.
- PHOTOS: Watch a photo slide show of the conference **here**.

## The Voice of Independents at the Crossroads

**Jarell Corley, Chicago, Illinois:** "This is my second time attending the conference and I learn something new every time. It is nice to meet with people from all over the country from different backgrounds and political beliefs who are able to come together around one critical issue - reforming our political process. I always get great ideas about how to become more active at home in Chicago."



Corley delivering a powerful pitch to audience to support Independent Voting's social media expansion.

**Charlotte Scot, Independents United for Progress, Connecticut:**



"I left the conference feeling refreshed and energized. The speakers and attendees were intelligent and articulate. The 2016 election was depressing at best. Many of us had been robbed of our candidate and only 52% of voters bothered to vote for one of the two most disliked candidates in history. Being present at the conference for a positive discussion about the need to overhaul the present system and to restore democracy was just what the doctor ordered. We independents are now the plurality and it is definitely time to put the duopoly on notice that we will be part of the future."

**Omar Obregon-Cuebas, member of student delegation from UNC-Greensboro, North Carolina:** "I found it very interesting to partake in this conference. It gives me hope knowing that there is a group of intelligent hardworking people who are working to change the electoral process."



Omar Obregon-Cuebos

**Julie Jeffries, Iowa:** "The National Conference of Independents was an incredibly motivating and emotional experience that infused me with the dedication to work with others to change OUR broken system. The two-party system is obsolete; it is misrepresenting the democratic republic of the U.S. in the interests of the Democratic and



Julie Jeffries (R) with Larry Reinsch, IA and Jackie Salit

it would be the independent movement. I'm on board!"

Republican parties. These two forces have acquired an undesirable amount of power in contradiction to OUR constitution which was written to protect (We, the people) from such corruption and manipulation."

**Brenda Temple, New York, Committee for Independent Community Action (CICA):** "As a CICA member and community activist, I believe that if there's any group that can effectively help represent the issues in lower income communities,



Brenda Temple (top, second from left) with members of CICA delegation

## Call to Committee

Four committees were launched at the conference, and activists in the Independent Voting network are invited to join (email [national@independentvoting.org](mailto:national@independentvoting.org) and indicate which committee you are signing up for). Committees will hold their first meetings by conference call, except New Yorkers for Primary Reform, which will meet in person. A committee focused on organizing and creating a voice for young independents (up to age 30) is forthcoming.



### **Task Force on 2018**

This committee will work on how the Independent Voting networks can participate in the 2018 mid term elections



### **Task Force on Training, Networking & Tools (TNT!)**

This explosive task force will work on expanding the Independent Voting network, developing training programs for our leaders, and tools for grassroots organizing and lobbying.



### **New Yorkers for Primary Reform**

Join the citywide committee launched by Open Primaries, Independent Voting and the New York City Independence Clubs last year, that is working on bringing the issue of primary reform to New York City



### **The Electoral Reform Committee**

Already a working group, this committee leads the way in creating and carrying out strategies for electoral reform campaigns across the country



## Independent Voting Launches New Website

Sarah Lyons, Director of Communications has been hard at work with the brand architects, digital engineers and content developers at Social Fix who worked their magic on our website. We now have a much sleeker, more accessible platform from which to satisfy the desire of so many Americans to connect and build, outside the confines of partisan politics. **Check it out.** We think you'll like it!



## A Voice in the Wilderness: Micah White

Micah White, Occupy Wall Street co-creator and author of *The End of Protest: A New Playbook for Revolution*, spoke with Justin Campbell in a wide ranging discussion on the social movements of our time for an article published last week in the *Los Angeles Book Review*. White points to two-time independent presidential candidate Lenora Fulani as someone "who we should be learning from, right now in the United States." Dr. Fulani spoke movingly at Crossroads for an Independent America on the relationship between power, poverty and democracy. Her talk can be found at [here](#) (Forward to 4:21:00).



Said White:



Micah White

"...if you want to talk about specifically who we should be learning from, right now in the United States, I'm going to tell you who I think we should be learning from. Everyone should be talking to Dr. Lenora Fulani. Who is Dr. Lenora Fulani? I just discovered her myself. In 1988, Dr. Lenora Fulani ran for president. She's an African-American woman and she ran for president in 1988. She was on every state ballot, 50 state ballots. The Green Party in 2016 did not get on every state ballot. What I'm saying is that she knows it's possible. Why do I have to wait until 2017 to learn about someone who did this in 1988? Everyone's telling me

*it's impossible but here's a black woman in 1988 who did this. We all pretend like Hillary Clinton was the first, but here's a black woman who did this. She's still alive, people. She should be in every single interview right now. I think what I'm saying, is, there are people out there who we can learn from, but again, notice she didn't just stay on the left. She worked with Left and Right, and Lefts hated her for that."*

[Read the full interview here.](#)

## Profiles in Independence:

Jessica Harrison, Queens, NY

**Jessica, 29, became active in the independent movement while working on the Bernie Sanders campaign. She currently works in the hospitality industry in New York. Here's her story:**

I have always been passionate about politics. When I was younger, I thought I was doing my part by voting regularly for the Democratic Party. However, when I learned more about the corruption of the two major parties and how they fought to keep voters out of the political process, I realized I couldn't support them. I immediately switched my registration to independent.



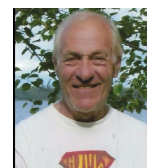
As an independent, I quickly learned that I would be locked out of New York primaries and for a long time. I just accepted that this was the way it was. I would show up during every general election frustrated with the limited choices and the many races that had one candidate running unopposed. But the 2016 election was very different for me. I was so excited about Bernie Sanders and his message that I considered re-registering as a Democrat. I loved what he was fighting for and appreciated that he had the record to back up what he was saying. However, by the time I was ready to take the plunge in November and re-register as a Democrat, I found that I had missed the deadline by one month. The primary wasn't even until April!

I decided if my voice wouldn't be heard, I would go out and register voters, so at least they could be counted. I canvassed regularly for Bernie Sanders and although I was happy to get people excited to go vote, I was devastated that I wouldn't be able to participate. To make matters worse, I heard countless reports of voter suppression happening all across the country. In New York, in addition to millions of independent voters locked out of the primaries, I watched as more than 120,000 voters, including many regular voters, were purged from the voter rolls and were being turned away at the polls. Neither Democrats nor Republicans stepped up to speak out against this suppression. Instead, they actively participated in it. I watched as they fought to keep third party voices out of the debates. I watched as the former DNC chair, Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, went on television and bragged that if it were up to her, she would have closed primaries in all 50 states. And although I knew this was not new behavior for the two parties, it was quite another thing to see it happening right before my eyes.

The behavior of the Democrats and Republicans not only angered me, but it also completely re-energized my independent spirit. I knew that I could no longer sit back idly while independent voters across the country were being locked out of the political process. I was so happy to get in touch with the wonderful people of Independent Voting and to get involved in the independent movement. Of course, there's much work to be done in reshaping the elections and creating a government that represents all of us. But the 2016 election showed me just how important and urgently needed this movement is. As voters, we deserve to have our voices heard through every single step of the political process. And I'm excited to be part of a movement that is fighting to make that possible.

## In the News

- **Why Politics is Failing America**, by Katherine Gehl (*Fortune*).
- **"Survey: Maine Voters Frustrated with Partisanship and Seek Solution to 'Rigged System'"**(*Booth Bay Register*). Independent Voting's Maine affiliate, Mainers for Open Elections and Open Primaries, a national leader on election reform, released a new survey that shines a light on the disconnect between Maine voters and the current political system. The survey identifies broad support for reforming the state's primary elections. *"We began our organization to fight for a better future for our state, and the country,"* said Joe Pickering, President of Mainers for Open Elections. *"We're strongly supporting the bill pending before the legislature right now. But should it fail, these poll results show Mainers would easily pass it as a ballot measure. That should send a message to the politicians: the time to act is now."* **If you are interested in participating in Mainers for Open Elections' efforts to open the elections, contact Joe Pickering at [joepick@aol.com](mailto:joepick@aol.com) or Bob Croce at [bcroce@gwi.net](mailto:bcroce@gwi.net).**



Bob Croce



Joe Pickering

- **"Poll: 74% of Floridians Think independent Should Vote in Party Primaries."**  
Independent Voting's Florida affiliate, Florida Fair and Open Elections joined with Open Primaries and Tim Canova, Chairman of Progress for All to poll Florida voters. *"Millions of Floridians are being locked out of the primary process, despite the fact that many elections are being decided in the primary. To add insult to injury, both political parties have hijacked the limited legal rights independents already have- to vote in primaries where candidates are from one party and will be unopposed in the general election-by inserting bogus write-in candidates that effectively negate the clear intent of our law. It is my firm belief that adopting a Top Two Open Primary will not only provide all citizens an equal opportunity to participate, it will force our representatives to be more accountable to all,"* said Steve Hough, Florida Fair and Open Primaries (*Tampa Bay Times*). Members of Florida Fair and Open Elections will be testifying at upcoming hearings before the Florida Constitution Revision Commission (<http://www.flcrc.gov/>) to place an initiative directly on the ballot in 2018. **If you are interested in participating, contact Steve Hough at [shough195@gmail.com](mailto:shough195@gmail.com).**
- 
- Steve Hough
- Editorial by Bob Perls, founder New Mexico Open Primaries, **"We Must Change the Way We Select District and Finance Candidates"** (*NM.Politics.net*)
  - **"Debate Commission Quietly Swapped Co-Chairs and No One Noticed,"** by Nick Bolelli (*Independent Voter Network*).
  - Letter to the Editor, **"Put Redistricting in the Hands of Voters,"** by Phil Leech, Michigan Independent Voters (*Detroit News*).

## Mark Your Calendars

- **Sunday, May 21, 5pm ET.** National Conference Call with Independent Voting's President, Jackie Salit. **[Register here for the call.](#)**
- **Sunday, June 4, 7 pm ET.** **Politics for the People Book Club** conference call. The club's next selection is *RatF\*\*Ked: The True Story Behind the Secret Plan to Steal America's Democracy*. Please join us on the conference call with the author, David Daley, the former Editor in Chief of Salon. **[Join the book club.](#)**

## 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!

IndependentVoting.org  
800-288-3201

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