



July 20, 2017

## Finding Otherness: A Blueprint for an Independent Conversation about 2020

**Independent Voting** President Jackie Salit has written an important discussion paper titled, "Finding Otherness: A Blueprint for an Independent Conversation about 2020" to facilitate a conversation about how the broad independent and reform movements could approach the 2020 presidential elections with a unified strategy.



*"It might seem as if 2020 is light years away," said Salit, "but given the rapidity with which governing institutions are losing their grip, it's not too soon to be discussing how we can work together to give the American people the power they need to reclaim our country."*

Salit's paper begins with the following two questions that she asks independents and reformers to consider:

**1) How should reformers be working to fix the system, revitalize American democracy, and give greater power to the American people?**

## 2) What strategy, if any, should independents and reformers be considering for the 2020 presidential election?

The paper was the subject of a front page article in **IVN** (Independent Voter Network), titled "Looking to 2020: A Battle Plan for Independents and Reformers." Chad Peace, attorney for the **Independent Voter Project** commented: "*Ms. Salit's blueprint is comprehensive and well-informed. A must read for anyone challenging the entrenched system.*"

Cara McCormick, Executive Director of Level the Playing Field, told IVN's Shawn Griffiths, "*Salit understands in her bones the need to break up the two-party duopoly to allow an independent candidate for president to emerge. In 2016, the parties produced a choice between the two most disliked presidential candidates in history. Salit acknowledges that working to open up the general election presidential debates to more than just two candidates is key to giving the American people what they want: a more open and competitive system that produces candidates with better ideas and broader appeal.*" **You can read the full article here.**

**Read the full version of "Finding Otherness" here.**

## A Closer Look: New York Constitutional Convention



Cathy Stewart, Coordinator, New York City Independence Clubs, and Vice President for National Development, Independent Voting, was one of the featured speakers at a recent public forum held on July 12 to explore the need for a Constitutional Convention. The event was sponsored by the New York People's Convention and Citizen's Union. Speakers discussed prospects for a "Yes" vote, an opportunity that is presented once every twenty years when the question is automatically on the ballot.

In her remarks, Stewart said that the vote to hold a Constitutional Convention gives New Yorkers "*a chance to say ENOUGH! It is a vote that COULD and to succeed MUST reignite the active involvement of New Yorkers, in government, public discourse and policy making.*" Stewart continued, "*The question of a Constitutional Convention asks New Yorkers to be active creators of a way to move our state forward, a chance to restructure things in a developmental way. This is a crucial time for our state and country and a crucial opportunity.*"

The event was hosted by Bill Samuels, the founder of New York People's Convention. Stewart was also joined on stage at the forum by Rachel Bloom, Director of Public Policy and Programs at Citizens Union; Claire Del Mar Chapman, Forward March NY; Art Chang, Citizens Union; Brandon West, New Kings Democrats; Bertha Lewis, The Black Institute; Michael Hardy, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, National Action Network; and Evan Davis, Committee for a Constitutional Convention.

## Iowa Independents Survey Progressive Democrats



Larry Reinsch and Julie Jeffries are both staunch independents. Larry voted for Donald Trump and Julie voted for Bernie Sanders. Larry, an activist with Independent Voting for many years, invited Julie to join him at Independent Voting's national conference in March where they met Jackie Salit. Larry and Julie went back to Iowa, eager to take the independent movement out to the citizens.

Salit reached out to Larry and Julie and asked them to attend the Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement Action Convention, where Bernie Sanders was the keynote speaker. She asked if they would do

a survey of people attending the convention to gauge support for reform, and how participants read the current political climate of the country.

Julie, a teacher, was eager to talk with folks attending the event, especially after the Iowa state legislature passed a bill this session that eliminated collective bargaining for Iowa State employees (including teachers). Here were her takeaways after speaking with people at the event:

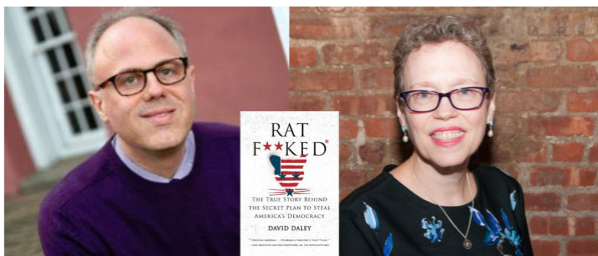
*"The resounding feeling I walked away with is that change is needed and is being demanded by all people for various reasons. Regardless of how each person identified, only one person was satisfied with the choices in the general election last year. The overwhelming majority of the people feel there is a real struggle between mainstream Americans and ruling political elites. The majority of people feel that our acting President, the Democratic Party, and the Republican Party are all "Out of Touch" with the concerns of most people in the United States. All of the people I surveyed agreed that Iowa should open its primaries. This reassured me that most if not all people in Iowa want to have conversations, debates, and movements that will bring about the changes they wish to see in Iowa and in the United States.*

Reinsch chuckled when reporting on the event: *"Julie tends to see everything as the glass half full and I see it a little bit more half empty."*

As for his experience of the event: *"It was very eye opening for me, the hard core Democrats who stick with their party like it is a religion. Many people I talked to would have the typical complaints about politics, but when the facts point back to the parties for the blame, they refuse to accept the obvious conclusion. Hypocrisy runs very deep in both parties. As a lifelong independent and a Constitutionalist at heart, it really gives me cause for concern to watch any group blindly follow and support an organization that puts party power and political victory above our laws and the fundamental ideals of our Republic."*

Concluded Julie: *"I feel that Open Primaries is a basic need of Iowans. This does not mean that I don't want a Democratic or Republican party to be part of the process; it does mean that I don't want **only** those two parties to benefit from the system and be the bullies of what is supposed to be an independent nation."*

## P4P Conversation with David Daley, author of RatF\*\*ked



On Sunday, June 4th, Cathy Stewart and the **Politics for the People** book club spent an hour in conversation with David Daley, the author of *RATF\*\*KED: The True Story Behind the Secret Plan to Steal America's Democracy*. The book outlines the Republican Party campaign begun after the 2008 presidential election, called REDMAP, to (rather inexpensively) win a sufficient number of state legislatures to control the

redistricting process after the 2010 census (the redrawing of district lines is done state by state every 10 years, following each census). It is a modern day whodunnit, and examines one of the

myriad ways in which our political process is currently run by the political parties at the expense of the American people.

Check out the [Politics for the People blog](#) to listen to the full recording of the conversation at the end of this post, or take a look at the highlights.

## Profiles in Independence

Jeanette Morris, Athol, Idaho

I was born in Pontiac, Michigan, the daughter of a General Motors mechanic, and, in fact, many in my family were members of the United Auto Workers. I was the youngest, but the first of six children to receive a Bachelors degree. It was an eye-opening experience living in the Right-to-Work (for less) state of Texas during my undergraduate years, where wages were low. I returned to Michigan where I spent 17 years as a pharmaceutical research chemist. During that time I became active in the martial arts, obtaining multiple black belts, and traveling to other countries, including the Philippines, for training. It was in these travels that I learned of alternative medicine. I decided to change careers and attended graduate school in Portland, Oregon, where I received my Masters in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. I fell in love with the Northwest, and with a commercial fisherman there. I decided to establish my acupuncture and Chinese herbal practice in North Idaho.






For the majority of my adult life my only active participation in politics was to read the League of Women Voters' guide before elections, and to have occasional conversations with co-workers in the break room. I was a lifelong Democrat. I started listening to talk radio and became aware of Bernie Sanders during the 2008 election. I listened to the Brunch with Bernie segment on the "Thom Hartmann Show" where the Senator took questions and comments from listeners. I wished he was my Senator, and even called in and spoke with him. When he threw his hat into the ring for President, I did everything I could to support him, including giving a speech at our county caucus and becoming a delegate to our state convention. The actions of the Democratic National Committee at the Idaho State Democratic Convention were also eye-opening. I "DemExited" the party during the National Convention and officially became an Independent.

While struggling to find my place politically following the 2016 election, I learned of and participated in Independent Voting's National Conference call. I was so impressed by President Jackie Salit that I was moved to attend Independent Voting's national convention in New York City. Around that time, I also became aware of the Draft Bernie for a People's Party movement and became their Idaho State Leader. I believe Bernie's popularity across the political spectrum gives him the unique ability to unite the country behind a strong Independent party or movement with the potential to give the electorate the change it has been screaming for. I was delighted to attend the People's Summit in Chicago in June of this year as a representative for both Independent Voting and Draft Bernie.

## In the News

- Natesha Oliver, founder of Missouri Independents Stand Together (MIST), wrote this oped: **Why Missouri Needs An Open Primary System**. In it she said, *"For the media and political parties, politics is just about putting people in boxes and keeping them there. As an African-American woman who has sometimes struggled to make ends meet, I know this all too well. After all, according to the political parties and media I should be a Democrat and should have voted for Hillary Clinton. In fact, I'm an independent, and Clinton did not receive my vote. It confuses the political know-it-alls that many in the black community, like me, think for themselves."* (Kansas City Star)



- MSNBC's Joe Scarborough announces on Stephen Colbert that he's becoming an independent. *"I am a Republican but I'm not going to be a Republican anymore,"* Scarborough told host Stephen Colbert. *"I've got to become an Independent."* [Read about it and watch the announcement here](#) (Slate)
- National Director of Outreach Gwen Mandell's Oped "[Survey Shows Support for Democratic Party/Independent Voter Alliance](#)" reveals the results of Independent Voting's survey conducted at Chicago's People's Summit. *"Our survey probed whether concern over the process by which the 2016 presidential elections were conducted had faded, whether the American people could directly engage the issue of political power, and if the Democratic Party could be a vehicle to effect empowerment for the American people, or if partisan interests would prevent it from doing so. In my opinion, the Democratic Party can't call itself democratic unless it addresses the failure of our current political process."* (NJ.net)
 
- Dr. Jessie Fields' oped "[Dr. King and the Meaning of Voter Rights](#)," appeared in *The Daily Caller*. Said Fields: *"Closed party primaries and partisan redistricting continue to segregate black communities and today many African Americans feel taken for granted by the Democratic Party and rejected by the Republican Party. The 2016 presidential election starkly demonstrated the effects of this reality."*

- Read "[Meet the New Independents](#)" in *The Boston Globe*.
- Jenn Bullock, Independent Pennsylvanians, penned a Letter to the Editor, "[Take Back Democracy](#)." She said: *"Media outlets thrive by emphasizing voices of rage or exuberance. This keeps us divided when it is critical for us to remain united. It is a dangerous distraction from the root of our problem: a stagnant, partisan quagmire that stifles innovative solutions and threatens our democracy. While we fight among ourselves, the two-party system rolls on, sharing power and shirking responsibility."* (Philadelphia Inquirer)
 

## Are you a member of [IndependentVoting.org](http://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!

Gwen Mandell  
Director of National Outreach  
[IndependentVoting.org](http://IndependentVoting.org)

*Give us a call today!*