



June 26 2018

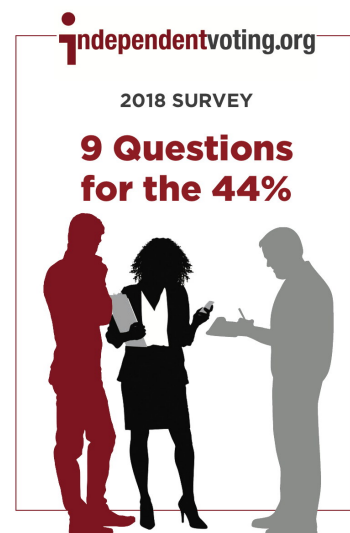
9 Questions for the 44%: Independent Voting National Survey, Online and In the Streets

Greetings independents and welcome to the many new readers who have come on board after taking the survey!

Our summer survey **9 Questions for the 44%** -- is off to a great start! We've already collected more than 1500 surveys from independent voters across the country (with every state but North Dakota represented). If you haven't taken the survey yet, **please take it here**. This survey is helping us gather more data on who independent voters are and what motivates them.

In addition to the online surveys we've received, independents are hard at work out in the field, conducting in-person surveys. Our goal is to collect at least 5000 surveys by Labor Day, with at least 2500 of those being done in-person.

Evelyn Dougherty and her team from the **Massachusetts Coalition of Independent Voters** are alternating weeks on the phones and talking to voters on the streets of Boston. She said, "Last weekend Diane Whitehouse, Lowell Ward and I went outside a train station in Roxbury and spoke to 16 indies. What was most





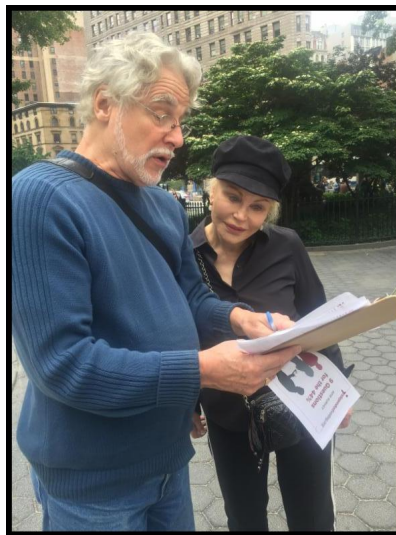
(L to R) Diane Whitehouse, Lowell Ward and Evelyn Dougherty from MCOIV, on the phones surveying voters

striking was the pride so many of them expressed in talking about their decision to be independents, and I felt pride having given them the opportunity! "

In Manhattan, **Julie Leak** and **Ed Brady** worked on the Upper West Side and **Lou Hinman** and **Nancy Hanks** spent some time in Madison Square Park. After working her neighborhood, Julie Leak has decided to post the survey on the list serve that reaches the residents in the seven building complex where she lives. Nancy said that for her, doing the survey on the streets is "...about intimacy. It's creating a brief moment with a fellow independent to talk directly about how we are doing in the complex and politically corrupt world."

Tiani Coleman, president of **New Hampshire Independent**

Voters, and a co-chair of the Survey Committee, is excited because in New Hampshire they've added an additional two-part question to the survey to see if independent voters in New Hampshire would like to see electoral reforms similar to those recently won by their Maine neighbors: ranked choice voting and citizen-funded clean elections. Independents in each state may add a field question tailored to the political situation in their state. "This is a great opportunity to talk to independents in your community, find out what they'd like to see happen, and grow the reform movements that are budding in your state," says Tiani.



Lou Hinman surveying Dina at Madison Square Park in New York City

Tiani's column this month on the *Independent Voter Network* is entitled " **Maine Ranked Choice Vote Proves Independent Voters Are NOT A Myth**." It invites readers to weigh in on the question, "Are Independent Voters Truly Independent, or Are They a Myth?" by **taking the survey**.

Randy Miller, President of the **Utah League of Independent Voters** and co-chair of the Survey Committee feels a sense of satisfaction when he goes out to conduct surveys. He's happy to see this survey finally taking root. Concerned about the continued biased and inaccurate reporting about independent voters, he said, "Clearly, the major pollsters aren't asking the right questions, so it is exhilarating to see fellow independent organizers getting those questions out there!"

Steve Richardson in Virginia is preparing his team to go out a few times over the course of the summer. He thinks that conducting this survey is valuable and important "because in our state, independents have been treated as 'spoilers' of partisan campaigns instead of voters with equal rights to participate in every election."

TAKE THE SURVEY HERE!

Make sure to share the survey with others. You can **share it by going to Independent Voting's Facebook page** or by **downloading it here** to do it with others person-to-person.

If you'd like to get involved in conducting field surveys, contact **Randy** or **Tiani**. We'll continue to keep you updated on the survey, and look forward to releasing the full results in September.

Western Colorado Independent Voters' Candidate Forum



Congressional candidate Diane Mitsch Bush makes a point during the candidates forum, hosted by the Western Colorado Independent Voters at the Glenwood Springs Library, as primary challenger Arn Menconi, left, and Nathan Steele (representing candidate Karl Hanlon) look on.

Western Colorado Independent Voters hosted a candidate forum at its June 13 meeting which was attended by 35 independent voters from the area. Since there were no independents running for Congress in Colorado's Third Congressional District, they invited the three Democratic Party candidates to participate in a candidate forum.

As the [article in the *Post-Independent*](#) put it, the forum presented many questions, but one underlying question took precedence -- How will a Democrat "win over" unaffiliated voters in Colorado's 3rd Congressional District? Passage of Proposition 108 last year means unaffiliated voters (independents) are no longer excluded from voting in primaries, and are able to cast a ballot in today's primary election.

Participating in the forum were former Colorado State Representative Diane Mitsch Bush, who is leading in the polls and has all the major party endorsements; former Eagle County Commissioner Arn Menconi, a self-described socialist; former Green Party member and "Berniecrat," and a campaign representative for Glenwood Springs attorney, Karl Hanlon, who is running close behind Bush and describes himself as a "citizen's candidate," who could not attend due to work commitments.

Randy Fricke, founder of Western Colorado Independents provided an account of the meeting:

"We invited these candidates because we believed they were at least somewhat sympathetic to our platform which focuses on election reform. Our platform was introduced at this meeting. Candidates were provided copies. The Q & A session with these candidates gave the independents in attendance a close-up view of each candidate.

"It was a unique experience for all of us," continued Fricke. "However, the party lines held strong when I asked if they would run as an independent if they lost the primary election. They were united in responding that they will support whoever wins the Democratic Party primary. It proves that Democrats and probably Republicans as well view independents as a second- or third-rate movement. They had a very condescending attitude toward us. This motivates me even more to push the independent voter movement harder.

"The Karl Hanlon campaign staff commented that this was one of the best forums that they have attended and the first one with independents. They told me that no other independent groups in Colorado's Third District had reached out to them. The forum was a huge success. I had trouble cutting off the dialogue after two hours."

On the Road in Maine

Independent Voting leaders were in Maine on Primary Day where voters used Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) for the first time in the primary for Governor and affirmed their support for this alternative voting method by decisively passing Question #1 using the political reform available to Maine voters, officially dubbed "The People's Veto."

Cathy Stewart, Independent Voting's Vice President for Development, was joined by Independent Voting activist **Ed Brady** and **New Hampshire Independent Voters'** President **Tiani Coleman**, who travelled from New Hampshire.

[Read Cathy Stewart's first-hand account of primary day](#) which includes the team's work with the independent

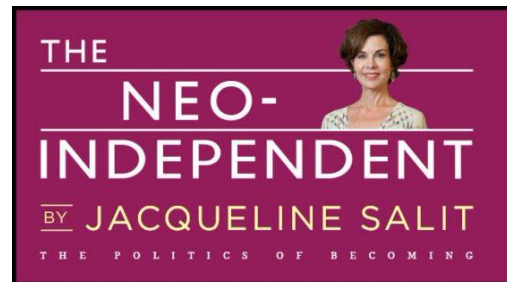
campaign of Terry Hayes, candidate for Governor, in "On the Road in Maine."



Tiani Coleman and Cathy Stewart

Salit: Maine Voters Lift Up Democracy; Democratic Party Pulls It Down

In her monthly column for the *Independent Voter Network*, **Jackie Salit** juxtaposes the victory in Maine (where, in "a mass veto of the state legislature's attempt to turn back the will of the voters," the voters passed Question #1 by a margin of 55% to 45%) with recent anti-democratic moves made by the Democratic National Committee Rules and Bylaws Committee. Last week they adopted a new rule for presidential candidates requiring that at the time they announce their candidacy "they must publicly affirm that they are a Democrat."



"When the voters get to make the decision, the rules become fairer," wrote Salit. "When the parties make the decision, it goes the other way."

[Read the complete column here](#)

The Two-Party System Keeps Racism in Place

Dr. Jessie Fields' column for *The Huffington Post* makes a strong case for why "Political independence is the best choice for the black community to break from party control and gain greater political mobility."

"Dismantling structural racism demands political independence," said Fields. "Fused with the black community's force of moral conscience and leadership, such a movement toward independence can transform American democracy and overcome the legacy of two-party control."

[Read the complete column here.](#)



Michigan Redistricting Goes on The Ballot

After 160 days of waiting, the Michigan Court of Appeals ruled unanimously and ordered that the proposal to establish an **Independent**

Citizens Redistricting Commission be added to the November 2018 ballot.

The Board of State Canvassers (BSC) had refused to certify the signatures until a court decision was reached. Volunteers from Voters Not Politicians, a grassroots-led effort, collected close to 400,000 signatures to put the initiative on the ballot to end gerrymandering and to stop politicians and special interests from manipulating the voting maps. The proposal would establish an independent commission of citizens, instead of politicians, to draw political boundaries. Congratulations!

Check out this Detroit News story for more.

The same week, **the Supreme Court avoided ruling on the constitutionality of partisan gerrymandering in two cases**, one from Wisconsin and the other from Maryland that challenged redrawn congressional and legislative districts.

Katie Fahey, founder and executive director of **Voters Not Politicians**, responded: "The certification of our signatures marks the biggest milestone so far in our citizen-led campaign. Thousands of volunteers and supporters are behind this initiative to end gerrymandering in Michigan by creating a fair, impartial, and transparent redistricting process. It's clear now more than ever that it is up to the voters to end the partisan manipulation of our voting maps once and for all. We cannot let November 7th come and wish we had done more to finally end partisan gerrymandering in our state."

Said **Phil Leech** of **Michigan Independent Voters**: "I'm so inspired by the thousands of volunteers who made this happen. This initiative is so important at a moment when so many people have lost faith in the parties. I'm more determined than ever that independents make a difference in this vote."

Rick Baize, a member of Independent Voting's network in Galesburg added: "When the choice between two party candidates leaves you feeling you have to choose the lesser of two evils year after year, then it's time to ensure district lines are partisan free and reflect people in their local community. It is time to ensure the best candidates run and have a chance to be elected. As the United States Constitution says "WE THE PEOPLE" need to ensure that voting districts and primaries reflect "WE THE PEOPLE."



Richard
Baize



Katie Fahey (R) and Voters Not Politicians volunteers

Politics for the People Hosts Conversation with Lois Leveen

On Sunday, June 3 the **Politics for the People** book club spent an hour talking with **Lois Leveen**, the author of *The Secrets of Mary Bowser*, a historical novel which tells the story of Mary Bowser, a slave who was freed, educated in Philadelphia and then returned to Richmond, Virginia where she became a spy. She posed as a

slave in the Confederate White House in order to pass valuable information to the Union.

Cathy Stewart, founder of the book club, began the conversation by asking Lois why she decided to write the book.

You can listen to the full book club conversation here

Politics for the People club member, Caroline Donnola, who originally recommended *The Secrets of Mary Bowser* to be a Politics for the People selection, asked Lois how she created and built out the characters of the book, especially Mary Bowser. How did she decide what she should sound like, how she should think, how she would respond to her many life challenges?

You can hear their conversation here.

For more excerpts, visit the Politics for the People blog.

And **check out the Politics for the People monthly column** for the *Independent Voter Network*. Cathy Stewart's guest columnist is **Frank Fear** who reviews Jackie Salit's epic book about independent politics, *Independents Rising*.

Profiles in Independence

Sydney Allard, Dartmouth College, New Hampshire and New York, New York

Growing up in Manhattan, my political ideologies were pretty much decided for me from the moment I was born. I attended rallies for causes I didn't understand, vehemently supported candidates whose positions were unknown to me, and most importantly insisted that I was a Democrat, with little to no knowledge of what the term actually meant.

In high school, I grew frustrated with the way political issues were discussed -- we were Democrats until proven guilty (and to be a Republican was certainly to be guilty). I felt that my high school's echo chamber-like environment made open, constructive dialogue hard to find -- since we almost all agreed with each other on social and political issues, our views and beliefs were rarely challenged. When, at times, I did disagree with my peers, I often said nothing since dissenting views were more often met with character attacks rather than productive rebuttals. When I got to college, I realized that my high school experience was just one manifestation of the political polarization that plagues communities all through the country.

I believe that our two-party system creates artificial divisions between people whose beliefs, if they took time to think for themselves, would likely be quite similar. If we challenge these distinctions, we demand better of our representatives, but also of ourselves. The labels "Democrat" and "Republican" serve as crutches so that we don't have to think for ourselves and come to our own conclusions -- we can just toe the party line and yell at anyone who challenges our beliefs. Perhaps if we stop looking at the world through the limited dichotomy of Democrat versus Republican, we can find effective solutions to the problems we face.

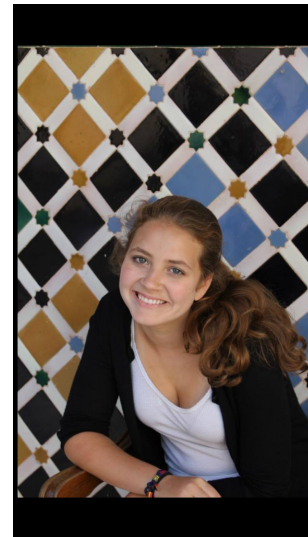
Read Sydney's opinion piece in *The Dartmouth*, Dartmouth's online publication, "**Independent for Independence**," in which she says "Allegiance to a political party hinders critical thinking."

In the News

Former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Congressman Rho Khanna on the success of Top Two in California and why the parties hate it. Read "**Don't Listen to the Establishment Critics. California's Open Primary Works.**" (*Washington Post*)



Los Leveen (L) and Cathy Stewart (R)



Sydney Allard

Independent Voices of Ohio activist **George Trapp** penned a letter to the editor, "**Support a Level Playing Field for All Voters.**" (*Highland County Press*)

Read "**With an Eye on Bernie Sanders, the Democratic National Committee Adopts New Restrictions for 2020 Presidential Candidates**" (*Yahoo News*)

Read "**Supreme Court Punts on Partisan Gerrymandering.**" (*Huffington Post*)

Dr. Lenora Fulani joined T.J. O'Hara, host of the *IVN* podcast "Deconstructed" for a discussion about her role as a political activist, including her role in addressing New York City's massive housing crisis, her experience as a candidate, and her views on our current political environment: "**Former Presidential Candidate Discusses Nation's Preeminent Slumlord.**" (*Independent Voter Network*)

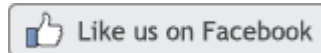
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