



December 17, 2018

Independents Send Letter to DNC Chair Tom Perez [*You can add your voice today!*](#)

Jackie Salit, the President of Independent Voting, invited leaders and activists of Independent Voting to join her in sending a letter to Tom Perez, chair of the Democratic National Committee . The letter asks Perez to meet with a group of independent leaders and take the decisive step of opening the 2020 presidential primaries and caucuses to independent voters.

Sent to Tom Perez on Wednesday, December 12, the letter was signed by 270 activists from 46 states and Washington, DC as part of the **Eyes on 2020** campaign.



Jackie Salit

The campaign aims to bring the issue of independents' participation in the 2020 presidential primaries center stage. It comes in the wake of the midterm elections where independents played a decisive role in Democrats regaining control of the House for the first time in 10 years.

The letter states:



Tom Perez

"While we, the undersigned, make no pledge or commitment with regard to supporting any particular 2020 presidential candidate -- Democratic, Republican, minor party or independent -- we believe the time has come for both governing parties, and for the Democratic Party in particular, to take the decisive step of opening the 2020 presidential primaries to independents. Your party has announced that its first order of

business in the new Congress will be the introduction of HB1, a political reform bill. However, to be a truly inclusive democracy, non-aligned voters must have full access to the electoral process, which HB1 does not address."

To read the full letter, [click here](#).

Add your name to the letter, let Chairman Perez know that independents want to be respected and recognized and the time has come to open the presidential primaries to independents. We will be delivering a second set of signatures after the holidays. To sign, [click here](#).

A 50-State Open Primary in 2020 is Within our Reach

John Opdycke, President of **Open Primaries**, sounded the opening bell on **Eyes on 2020** by challenging the parties to open the 2020 presidential primaries to independents in every state in his opinion piece that appeared in *The Hill*. Opdycke makes the case that though there is stiff resistance within both parties, "a 50-state open presidential primary in 2020 is not a pipe dream." Says Opdycke:



John Opdycke

"It's understandable that the prognosticators focus on the candidates. The "will they run?" guessing game draws eyeballs to the political shows and makes great copy on Page Six. But there is an equally important, if less sexy, process underway for 2020 that deserves attention too. This story is not about the candidates. It's about who will be allowed to vote in the presidential primaries."

[Read Opdycke's op-ed here](#).

Partisans Attempt to Roll Back the Will of Voters in Michigan and Ohio

Legislators in Michigan and Ohio are attempting to turn back the will of the voters who passed reform initiatives in both states during the midterm elections.

On November 6, over 61% of Michigan voters passed a constitutional amendment for redistricting reform. But when the state legislature convened, Sen. Phil Pavlov of St. Clair introduced a bill (SB1254) that would allow the legislature to maintain the right -- contrary to the initiative's intention and explicit content -- to draw district lines. **Voters Not**

Politicians, which led the campaign for Michigan's redistricting reform, is asking people to contact their legislators and urge them to vote NO on SB1254 and any other legislation that interferes with the redistricting reform amendment to Michigan's constitution. "We expect lawmakers will use (this bill) to alter the fair, impartial and independent nature of the commission that was overwhelmingly approved by voters," said **Katie Fahey**, founder of Voters Not Politicians.



In Ohio, just months after voters overwhelmingly passed a ballot initiative to end partisan gerrymandering of US House Districts, Republican lawmakers fast-tracked a proposal to make it nearly impossible for Ohioans to bring citizen initiatives to the ballot.

HJR 19 would have required citizen-initiated constitutional amendments to get 60% of the vote to pass. Additionally, it introduced onerous restrictions on the petition process to get an initiative on the ballot. Canton activist and **Independent Voice of Ohio** member **Donna Plunkett** remarked, "Ohio lawmakers are finding the voice and political actions of the people not to their liking. HJR 19 is their attempt to regain control of what they perceive as their loss of control over the legislative process. They seem to have forgotten that they work for us. As an independent, I will continue to oppose any efforts, of which HJR 19 is yet one more, by our elected officials to limit the voice of the people."



Donna reports that there was a final hearing this week and after very strong testimony against the bill by 31 individuals and groups, the committee did not vote on the bill. This means that for the moment the bill has been stopped.

The tactic of state legislatures introducing legislation to overturn the will of the voters is not new. We saw the Maine legislature do this last year with regard to ranked choice voting, which prompted a second initiative, a **People's Veto**, to force the legislature to enact RCV.

Spokesperson Training Focuses on Eyes on 2020

Sarah Lyons, **Independent Voting's** Director of Communications, led a spokesperson training on Sunday, December 9 for members of Independent Voting's national network to help local leaders represent the concerns of independents in their area. The call focused on how to raise the visibility of independents with two main messaging thrusts -- the role of independents in the midterm elections and the **Eyes on 2020** campaign. Spokespeople were shown examples of how to take those messages out across four levels of media: local, state, regional and national. "It's the cumulative effect of lots of different efforts to raise the visibility of independents that creates the possibility for a groundswell," said Lyons.



If you'd like to be a spokesperson for the concerns of independents in your area, contact Sarah Lyons at slyons@cuiip.org.

Politics for the People Book Club Recordings -- A Conversation with Dr. Elisabeth Rosenthal

On Sunday, December 2, the **Politics for the People** book club spent an hour in conversation with **Dr. Elisabeth Rosenthal**, the author of *An American Sickness: How Healthcare Became Big Business and How You Can Take It Back*. Politics for the People members had a fascinating conversation with Dr. Rosenthal, exploring many aspects of the health care industry, what patients can do, and what some of the pathways toward reform might be.



Dr. Rosenthal and P4P founder and host **Cathy Stewart** discussed Dr. Rosenthal's journey from the emergency room to writing about healthcare reform, thinking she would one day be able to return to her calling as a doctor. Twenty years later, Dr. Rosenthal decided to write *An American Sickness*. In working on the book, she "...dug into each area of healthcare to see...really how it came to be that we put profit on the front burner and health on the back burner."

You can listen to the full conversation or segments of the call here.

Profiles in Independence

This issue of *The Hub* features two new activists in the Independent Voting network:

Rose Puthenpurackel, Elmhurst, Illinois

My journey began in the final years of my post-graduate political science program. I had been focusing on global grassroots activism and loved living in different countries. But I was experiencing real rug burn in a program meant to cultivate future politicians. I hosted community leaders, bureaucrats, and political hopefuls of all ages. But beneath the interplay, I agonized over my 'defects,' recoiling from the exclusive, self-interested and simultaneously ingratiating culture that permeates negotiations, dinners, and many academic gatherings. Then came the sticky realization that the only social-political culture we know produces our current leaders.



Rose Puthenpurackel

To avoid this simple and endlessly complex reality that our doomed political system is an image of our social values, I moved to Dublin, Ireland to work on a friend's film. But reality follows and the ripple effects of our 2008 housing bubble came knocking on Dublin's door in 2014, throwing hundreds of families with children onto the streets. The Irish activists, a durable community of people who put the least visible person before themselves, made a difference. After a full year of joining and maintaining squat teams and social centers, I hitchhiked to Kiev, Ukraine, my field and home for two years.

Before finally coming back to the States, I directed my own short film in Moscow. My brightest Russian friends showed me beyond a doubt that sincerity is the immutable answer to hopeless odds. Our conviction which refuses to blind itself for the sake of normalcy is what makes us 'Other' and inspire each other.

I want to be like my friends who inspired me; to stay as long as it takes to get to the root of the problem and be willing to change myself to see a real solution. That's how I came to be an independent.

T.J. Elgin, Westport, Connecticut

When I was young, I moved around a few times and landed in Westport Connecticut. My grandfather raised me and taught me everything he knew. He was a man with seven different degrees.



T.J. Elgin

My activist story starts when I began asking questions about why the system works the way it does. In my town, I wanted to make a difference so I joined the Democratic Party... it seemed enticing. (Grandfather was a life long Republican.) At the time I just thought it was the Republicans who were about Big Business and didn't care about environmental and "social" issues. It became clear that the Democratic Party wasn't much different. I ran for office anyway! It took some time but I collected the signatures with the help of The Libertarian Party and some independent locals! I didn't win but had an impact on the elections. I also helped other candidates in nearby towns on their candidacies. This past election, I ran as a US Senate candidate of the Green Party.

I am a fighter and will fight to change this state and the country. We must make freedom ring and we must stop the establishment at any cost! I found **Independent Voting** and I like the focus on building up the individual, not a party. People should have the opportunity to vote for the person, not the party. After these elections, it's clear that the evolution of our political system is at hand. We need to stop focusing on one party or another and continue to build a movement that focuses on making the future a better place for all.

In the News

Businessman and open primaries supporter **Kent Thiry** on the rise of independent voters in Colorado: Read "[A New Independent Electoral Landscape](#)" (*The Gazette*)

" **Kasich Should Run for President as a Reformer**" (*Independent Voter News*)

Steve Hough, Director of **Florida Fair and Open Primaries** and **Perry Waag**, NE Florida Chapter Leader of **Unite America**, " **Stand with Us For Open Primaries**" (*Tallahassee Democrat*)

Also in Florida, Martin Dyckman asks in his op-ed, " **As Florida Independent Voters Grow in Number, Will Open Primaries be Far Behind?**" (*Sun Sentinel*)

" **Focus on Open Primaries to Expand Voter Turnout**" (*Albuquerque Journal*)

" **Editorial: NJ Needs Independent Redistricting Process**" (*NorthJersey.com*)

" **Tennessee GOP Calling for Closed Primaries**" (*Johnson City Press*).

More on the backlash in the Midwest as a result of redistricting victories from *The New York Times*: " **With Power Grabs in the Midwest, G.O.P. Risks a 2020 Backlash**. " "Many voters have become more supportive of a nonpartisan approach to redistricting, following years of gerrymanders that carved up states into impregnable red and blue districts and led to more political polarization rather than cooperation. Four states last month approved ballot measures that would create some form of an independent redistricting commission." (*The New York Times*)

This month's **Politics for the People** column in *IVN News* is a review by **Frank Fear** of Jon Meacham's new book, *The Soul of America*. (*Independent Voter News*)



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