



August 6, 2019

Let All Voters Vote: Discussion on the Expansion of Voter Rights Continues

Following the publication of their groundbreaking article, "[Let All Voters Vote: Independent Voters and the Expansion of Voting Rights in the United States](#)" in the *Touro Law Review*, authors Harry Kresky, Jeremy Gruber, and Michael Hardy have continued to expand the conversation with an appearance on the IVN podcast "[How Our Political Duopoly Suppresses Your Right to Vote](#)" hosted by Shawn Griffiths, and



an in-depth discussion
with 87 participants on

(LtoR) Jeremy Gruber, Michael Hardy, Harry Kresky

the July 29 **Politics for the People Book Club** national conference call. Kresky and Gruber also co-authored an op-ed published in *The Hill* entitled "**Electoral Reform Should Not Further Entrench the Political Parties.**" In it, they say:

"For far too long, the accepted approach to electoral reform has been to concede control of our electoral system to the two major parties, while using legislatures and the courts to smooth over the excesses that came as a consequence. But political parties are private organizations with no constitutional basis and interests separate from the body politic. And while this approach to reform -- continue the partisan electoral process, but create boundaries, regulations and limits -- has allowed for considerable progress for individual rights in this country, it also has contributed significantly to the deterioration of democratic governance."

Harry Kresky is counsel to Independent Voting. Jeremy Gruber is Senior Vice President of Open Primaries. Michael Hardy is the Executive Vice President & General Counsel for the National Action Network.

Pennsylvania: Open Primary Bill Passes Senate, Moves on to House

"These are exciting times," offered Jenn Bullock, Director of **Independent Pennsylvanians**. "Independent Pennsylvanians has been fighting for open primaries for over a decade, and we are finally seeing real momentum with the passage of SB 300 and the formation of a powerful coalition of election reform groups called **Open Primaries PA**, which includes Independent Pennsylvanians, Open Primaries, the Committee of Seventy, Common Cause Pennsylvania, Commonwealth Commonsense, Philly Set Go and League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania."

A new video produced by Open Primaries features Independent Pennsylvanians' public education campaign and supporters of the effort.

Pennsylvania State Senator Anthony H. Williams will moderate a public forum on August 14 at the Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library, co-sponsored by a network of reform organizations. The event will look at election styles used across the country and possible reforms, including nonpartisan municipal elections, open primaries and ranked-choice voting. Independent Voting and Open Primaries board member Dr. Jessie Fields will be featured on a panel that includes: David Thornburgh (Committee of Seventy), Micah Sims (Common Cause), and Michael Fabius (Ballard Spahr LLC). For more information, contact Jenn Bullock at independentpa@gmail.com.



"The days of independent voters sitting on the sideline during Pennsylvania's primary elections could be coming to an end," proclaimed **PA Live**. "The Senate voted 42-8 to open primaries to allow the 785,000 unaffiliated voters to cast votes on either the Republican or Democratic ballots, starting with next year's primary." The bill now goes to the House for a vote in the Fall.

[Read more here.](#)

Jackie Salit: Long Live the Crackpots!

In her column this month for IVN, Jackie Salit writes about the passing of Ross Perot, the mischaracterizations of him and the movement he sparked.

" Those of us who had been part of and partners with the Perot rebellion knew that the official 'branding' of Ross Perot was already set in stone. The two-time independent presidential candidate in 1992 and 1996, whose millions of supporters sent a shockwave through the calcifying two-party political system, would be cast as a crackpot."

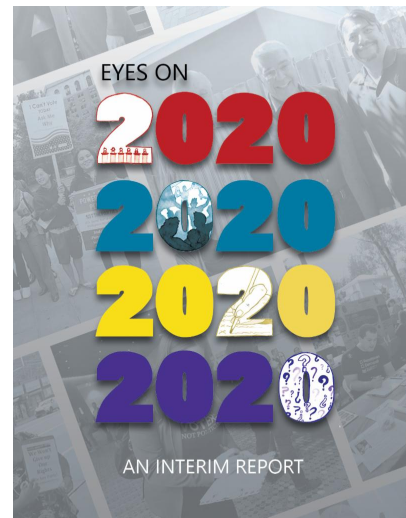


[Read column here .](#)

EYES on 2020 Interim Report Published

Independent Voting has published a 38 page interim report outlining the progress of the EYES on 2020 campaign, which is pressing for the inclusion of independents in the presidential primaries across the country. The report includes state-by-state updates, a review of significant inroads made, and sample organizing materials.

In her introduction to the report, Jackie Salit noted, "We launched EYES on 2020 in January of this year to address a hidden form of voter suppression in our national election process -- the exclusion of close to 26 million independents from the presidential primaries. We wanted to test the willingness of the parties to adapt themselves to a new and permanent set of circumstances in our democracy -- namely that upwards of 45% of Americans have become independents."



The report is being distributed around the country.

[Click here to read the PDF of the report.](#)

Independents Join Debate Watch Panel

The July 30 and 31 presidential debates provided another occasion for independents to develop our response to the 2020 elections. After 89 independents offered their comments using Independent Voting's debate scorecard following the first debate ([see results here](#)), 115 independents joined a panel of debate watchers to watch and critique rounds two and three.

CNN Democratic debate stages are set

First night



Email gmandell@independentvoting.org to join the Independents' Debate Watch Panel.



As a lead-up to last week's debate, *CNN*'s Randi Kaye sat down with a group of Michigan voters to hear their thoughts on the 2020 elections. *CNN* had reached out to us to help put together the panel which included Frank Fear, Andrew Rodney and David Palmer from the Independent Voting network. [Watch the segment here](#)

Eyes on 2020: A Great Day in Harlem

Dr. Jessie Fields and Alvaader Frazier led a team of independent activists that collected 122 signatures on a letter calling on the New York State Democratic and Republican party chairs to open the presidential primaries at Harlem's annual "A Great Day in Harlem" event at Grants Tomb. A team will reassemble on August 17 and 18 for the annual Harlem Day weekend.

"There is a hunger for a more open process in which the community can participate," said Fields "And we have long and deep ties to the black community and to Harlem through Lenora Fulani, and our independent organizing. It is always deeply moving to experience our history and the roots of political independence in Harlem."

Frazier added: "We gave love and independent politics...EYES on 2020 and our people loved us back at another opening in Harlem."

Also, last month in New York, *The Riverdale Press* advocated for open primaries in New York State in an editorial, " [Let the Voters Be Heard](#) ."



Richard Kirkpatrick speaks with supporter of Dr. Fulani and independent politics since 1988



(LtoR) Richard Kirkpatrick, Alvaader Frazier, David Belmont, Jessie Fields



Allen Cox with supporter



Jessica Marta and Harlem Day attendee

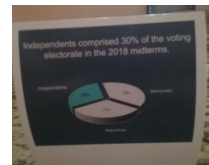
Spokesperson Training in Action

Donna Plunkett, independent activist in Ohio, tells *The Hub* about her innovative idea to get the word out about independents:

"Using the information from the Power Point provided by Sarah Lyons as part of Independent Voting's Spokesperson Training, I made table tents with one piece of data on each side of the table tent. I am involved in several political action organizations as well as in local social organizations such as women's clubs, education-related organizations, and regular monthly luncheons with friends. Conversations in these groups often turn to politics. Why not bring along some short, easily understandable pieces of data about, in this case, the independent 'movement' and the changing nature of the American population's political affiliations? What better way to do so than through table tents which could be easily transported and easily placed on tables at meetings to spur discussion on a variety of political data/information points? The table tents have worked very well, with people in these groups looking forward to the next table tent discussion. Also, the discussions are based on facts, not opinion. By request from these groups, my next effort is to place key pieces of the Mueller Report on table tents!"



Sarah Lyons conducts spokesperson trainings by Zoom the third Thursday of every month. If you are interested in developing your spokesperson skills, contact Sarah at slyons15@gmail.com



independentvoting.org

NATIONAL
Conference Call
WITH JACKIE SALIT

Monday, September 16, 8PM ET

Have a question that you'd like Jackie Salit to address?
Send it to national@independentvoting.org or submit it when registering for the call.

SIGN ME UP FOR THE NEXT CALL

Profiles in Independence

Debbie Hollis, Shreveport, Louisiana

My core values are firmly rooted in my life experiences because these are the same life experiences shared by so many of my fellow Louisianans.

Our state maintains a 20-25% poverty rate; in my district, the rate is actually 43% - 56% (Source: *United Way of Northwest Louisiana 2019 ALICE Report*).

Louisiana has the nation's second-highest poverty rate, and our child poverty rate is the highest in the country. The economic gap between rich and poor is the fourth-highest in the country (Source: *Louisiana Budget Project*). I believe that working to alleviate poverty is the key component to building healthy families and a healthy state. Poverty is the core intersectional issue affecting education, equal opportunity and justice in Louisiana.



Debbie Hollis

Partisan politics play a key role in maintaining this status quo. Too many of our state representatives in North Louisiana -- Democrats and Republicans alike -- do not advocate for people like me. They vote against living wages and workplace equality. They allow big corporations to exploit our natural resources and our labor force - and grant them huge tax breaks in return. They support "right-to-work" laws, neglect our crumbling infrastructure, and over-tax our small businesses.

Louisiana's politicians have a long history of corruption. That's why I am running for state senate as an independent. I have helped shape policies related to poverty, reproductive rights, equality and education for several years as an activist, advocate and outspoken community leader. I believe I can effect even greater change for the people of Louisiana as a State Senator.

In the News

Read Dr. Jessie Fields latest column, "[Why I Believe More Black Americans are Now Voting Independent](#)." (*Blavity*)

Read Kentucky independent Chuck Witt's great oped, "[Will Kentucky Ever Be Fair for Independents?](#)" (*Winchester Sun*)

As Jeff Jacoby points out in "[How Democrats and Republicans Rig Rules Against Independents](#)," "America has two major political parties, and tens of millions of Americans don't care for either of them." (*Boston Globe*)

Read "[Meet the Reformer: 10 Questions with Katie Fahey](#)" (Katie Fahey spearheaded the Voters Not Politicians anti-gerrymandering drive in Michigan and founded a new organization called "The People") (*Fulcrum*)

Sue Davies (New Jersey Independent Voters) and Steve Barratt (No Labels) teamed up to write a Letter to the Editor, "[Independent Voters Want the Right to Vote in New Jersey's State 2020 Presidential Primaries](#)." (*Hudson Reporter*)

Read "[Lawsuit: California Should Open Its Presidential Primary to Independents](#)" (*California*)

Matters)

Read the newest op-ed by New Hampshire Independent Voters' Tiani Coleman, "**It's a Big Deal that Republicans Don't Plan to Hold Debates.**" (IVN)

In his announcement that he is leaving the Republican Party to become an independent, Congressman Justin Amash said: " When I first got to Congress I thought I could change things from the inside, but as I've spent time there I've seen that not only me, I don't think there is anyone in there who can change the system." Read "**Justin Amash, Sick of 'Partisan Nonsense,' Leaves Door Open To Third Party Presidential Campaign In 2020**" (RealClearPolitics)

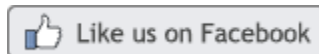
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