



March 24, 2020

A Note from Jackie Salit, Independent Voting President

In these dire circumstances, it can be difficult to think about the importance of developing our democracy, or the systemic reform issues that independent-minded people care about. We're all focused on the immediate needs of our families and communities and the national mobilization to mitigate the spread of the virus while radically upgrading the health system's capacity to respond.



At the same time, the crisis shows us the deep level of disconnect between our public policy-making and the actual human needs that are arising at this time in history. It's not an ideological question. It's really something very practical. We must close that gap.

For this reason, the work to fortify our democracy and to re-set our political practices and paradigms is an essential part of the path to recovery from the Coronavirus pandemic.

What we do today, the actions we take, the alternatives we create, will determine how well we emerge from this crisis. Thus, we offer you this edition of The Hub with humility and with determination to continue on our path.

Florida Supreme Court Rules "All Voters Vote" Initiative on the Ballot in November

Great news! The voters of Florida will have their say!

Last week, **the Florida Supreme Court ruled** Amendment 3, the **All Voters Vote** open primaries initiative, constitutional and certified it for the November 2020 ballot.

The All Voters Vote initiative would establish a top two nonpartisan primary system in Florida. It puts these questions before the voters: Should political parties control the electoral process, and should all voters have equal voting rights?

Said Steve Hough, Director of Florida Fair and Open Primaries, which helped lay the groundwork for the initiative:



"All Voters Vote collected 1.2 million signatures and has satisfied the constitutional requirements necessary to put the proposal before voters in November. Although the state Attorney General and both major parties filed briefs with the court in an attempt to stop the proposed amendment from moving forward, the Florida Supreme Court found their objections were without merit. As someone who has been working for years to open Florida's primaries to independent voters, I'm ecstatic that the fate of the proposed amendment now rests in the hands of the voters, not party leaders."

Congratulations Steve Hough, Florida Fair and Open Primaries and the All Voters Vote team! This is an important step forward for the voters of Florida, for the country and all who believe that a functioning democracy is more important than ever.

Read " **Florida Supreme Court Clears Open Primary Constitutional Amendment for November Ballot** " (*WFSU*)

Read " **Florida Voters Get to Decide on Who Votes in Primaries** " (*Tampa Bay Times*)

Independents Protest Closed Primaries at the Polls

Amid the growing political and health crisis, local independent leaders made their claim on democracy by organizing protest actions on Primary Day (March 17) in Arizona (**Mesa, Prescott, Peoria and Tucson**) and Florida (**Panama City, Land O'Lakes, New Port Richey, Dade City, and Winter Park**). These are two states that held presidential primary contests that excluded independent voters. In Florida, activists also educated voters about Amendment 3.

Steve Hough recorded several statements from independents who were unable to vote as he set up shop 150 feet from the Bay County Supervisor of Elections office. **Here's one from Alex, a young woman who talks about how she was barred from participating in the primary election.**

In Arizona, protest participants had signs like "I Can't Vote Today; Ask Me Why," and an article written by Independent Voters for Arizona leader Al Bell, titled **"Voting if You Can in the 21st Century,"** published last week in *The Arizona Capitol Times* .

Check out the photo gallery from all the actions below:



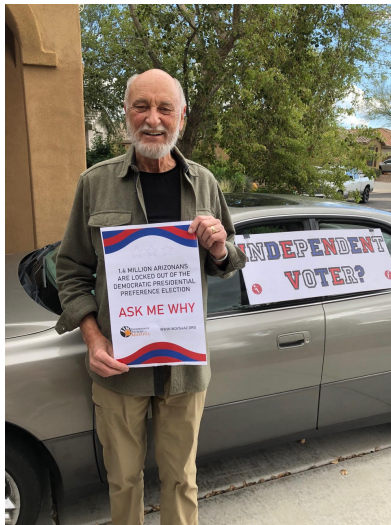
Ellen Rauch, Pat Quinn and Jean-Paul Genet at a social distance in Tucson, Arizona in front of the County Recorder's office.



Steve Hough in Panama City, Florida



Jeff Wattier and Donald Wilde in front of a busy intersection near the First Christian Church at Rio Salado Pkwy, Mesa, Arizona



Al Bell, Independent Voters for Arizona leader from Peoria, Arizona registers his claim on democracy.



Kim Wright was at Courthouse Plaza in Prescott, Arizona. She got lots of honks from passers-by and even got one to join her in her protest



In Winter Park, Florida, lots of drivers honked for Deb Smith in front of the Elks Lodge polling site.





Elise Mysels, leader of Pasco Activists at the Central Pasco Professional Center in Land O'Lakes, Florida



RepresentUs Pasco County leader Kelly Tanner at the Board of Elections in Dade City, Florida



Ted Apelt in Land O'Lakes, Florida representing Florida Fair & Open Primaries



Panama City, Florida - Let All Voters Vote





Kathy Strickland (left) and Angelika Purkis (right), Open Primaries activists in New Port Richey, Florida

The Fight for Open Primaries in Missouri

HB 1639, a bill introduced by Rep. Jered Taylor (R), is making its way through the Missouri legislature. This bill would force voters to register into a party 23 weeks before the primaries and close the primaries to any voter who did not pick a party. Even though Missourian taxpayer dollars pay for the elections, hundreds of thousands of voters would be excluded from participating.

Open Primaries and the **The People** are conducting a campaign to stop the bill. Open Primaries is circulating an **online petition** to the Rules Committee that hundreds of Missouri voters have signed. The People is working with Missourians across the state to write letters to the editor for their local newspapers, and to send postcards to the Rules Committee in advance of their return to the Capitol at the end of the month.

Independent Voting has joined the effort with a volunteer team of activists who are calling into districts where members of the Rules Committee live. If you would like to join this volunteer team, email **Gwen Mandell**.

Read "**Protect Missouri's Open Primary**" (*Joplin Globe*)

Meanwhile, **St. Louis Approves** is spearheading an effort to adopt Proposition D, which would establish an open, non-partisan system for elections to citywide offices. The initiative combines nonpartisan voting with approval voting. St. Louis, a majority Black city, is one of the few major cities that does not have a nonpartisan system of governance.

View the video below for an endorsement by David Cherry, Independent Voting board member, Chicago's City Leader of the All Stars Project, and President of the Leaders Network, a body of prominent faith and community leaders working together for social justice in Greater Chicago.

In the video, Cherry strongly disagrees with the idea (promoted by certain political party leaders) that the African American community has no stake in reforming the party system.

"The Black community has always been in the forefront of the fight for democracy," said Cherry.



Politics and the Pandemic: Watch *The Political Vigilante*

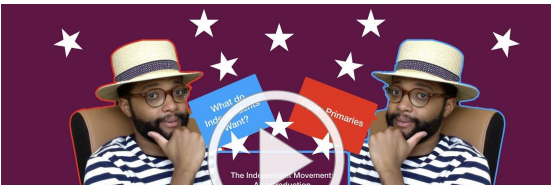
Graham Elwood interviewed Jackie Salit on his podcast *The Political Vigilante* and asked the question "Did Bernie Convince Independent Voters During the Debates?"

What results is a wide-ranging discussion about the state of the political system. "The disruption of everything is what's on the agenda and the political system is not going to be exempt," said Salit. "The issue is who's setting the priorities in this country." Watch the episode below.

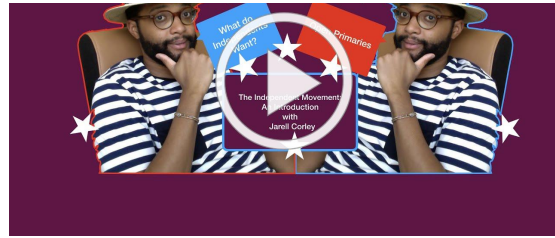


Independent Activist Starts YouTube Channel

Independent Voting activist Jarell Corley decided to create a YouTube channel focusing on independents. His series is



aply called "The Independent." In this first episode, Jarell introduces himself and how he became interested in the independent movement.



Said Corley, a Chicago native who now resides in the state of Washington, "There isn't something similar on YouTube dedicated to our movement. I've been thinking about starting a channel for some time now and I figured I should do it about something I'm passionate about, something that's meaningful, and something I can see myself talking about for years to come. Furthermore, I think the internet can amplify our voice and invigorate the next generation of voters who will more likely than not identify as independent. "

Check out the first episode.

Profiles in Independence

Lance Morris, Wolf Point, Montana

My name is Lance Morris. I am Yankton Dakota and Wadopana Nakoda born on the Assiniboine & Sioux Reservation in NE Montana. My Dakota Name is Wahukaza. My Dakota Name is Fighting Grizzly Bear Spirit. I went to one of the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools in Nevada. Then to Haskell Indian Nations College. I am an independent activist.



Lance Morris, MT

Many of my people are Democrat, and about 25 percent are Republican. I will not belong to a political party. Being an independent voter gives me freedom to choose. Indigenous People and Nations suffer from historical trauma caused by hundreds of years of war with European and then colonial invasions of Indigenous territories and the extermination of over 60 Indigenous Nations. In the 1800s, Democrats forged the policies of Indigenous removal from ancient homelands and when the Republican party took power for the first time they hung 38 Sioux warriors in Minnesota. To list atrocities by both political parties inflicted on Indigenous People and Nations would take too long.

Both political parties will not admit guilt or apologize for their part in what was done to the First People of America.

I will not belong to the political parties with Indigenous blood on their hands that hasn't

been answered for.

I believe that independent voters are free thinkers. I believe they are fair and support Indigenous issues. Today's political climate must change and independent voters will make the difference. For unity and healing, we need to walk forward together as a Nation.

Walk in Beauty.

Mitakue oyasin Wahukaza.

In the News

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit heard oral arguments Feb. 24 in *Level the Playing Field v. FEC* - a lawsuit that the advocacy group filed in 2015 along with its CEO, Peter Ackerman, and the national Green and Libertarian Parties. The suit asserts that the debate commission's directors have violated federal law requiring the commission to be "nonpartisan" and use "objective criteria" in deciding who gets to appear on the presidential debate stage. Read **"Could the Presidential Debates Look Different this Fall?"** to learn more. (*The Fulcrum*)

Bridge Alliance leader Deb Molineaux pinpoints Independent Voting president Jackie Salit as as one of the four women to pay attention to if you want different politics. **Read more here.** (*The Fulcrum*)

In a recent episode of the **Civics 101** podcast, host Hannah McCarthy is joined by Independent Voting President Jackie Salit, New Hampshire Independent Voters President Tiani Coleman, and Samara Klar of the University of Arizona School of Government and Public Policy for a conversation about the growth and power of independent voters. (*New Hampshire Public Radio*)

Read **"Lessons Learned from the Real Operation Chaos in South Carolina,"** an editorial by Open Primaries President John Opdycke (*Joplin Globe*)

"Many Democrat-leaning Independents Aren't Leaning Towards Biden...At Least Not Yet," says Frank Fear after analyzing exit interview data collected from registered voters who cast ballots in 16 open primary states. (*LA Progressive*)

Joe Pickering of Mainers for Open Elections responded to Independent U.S. Senator Angus King's commentary about Maine's 200 year birthday with this letter to the editor, **"Open Elections Would Ensure a Brighter Future for Maine ."** (*Maine Sunday Telegram*)

Read **"Independent Voters Resent Being Shut out of Florida's Primary"** (*Spectrum News*)

Read "**Group Begins Effort for Non-Partisan Redistricting Commission**" (*Arkansas Times*)

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Give us a call today!

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