



June 5, 2020

Can We Move Forward in These Difficult Times

On Wednesday, June 3, Independent Voting President Jackie Salit hosted a Zoom event titled "**How Can We Move Forward in Anger and Determination? An Independents' Dialogue on Current Events, Protest and Political Power** ." The event took place in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers and the public outcry for justice that resulted.

You can view the full discussion below.



Salit invited a number of special guests to join her for the discussion.

Michael Hardy (right), Executive Director and General Counsel of the National Action Network and Rev. Al Sharpton, shared his view on the prosecutorial process in Minnesota. Rev. Sharpton is the advisor to the Floyd family and delivered the eulogy at Thursday's memorial service. Hardy spoke about how the process was moving more quickly and positively than in the past.



David Cherry (left), is the leader of the All Stars Project in Chicago and President of the Leaders Network, a group of ministers and activists fighting for social and



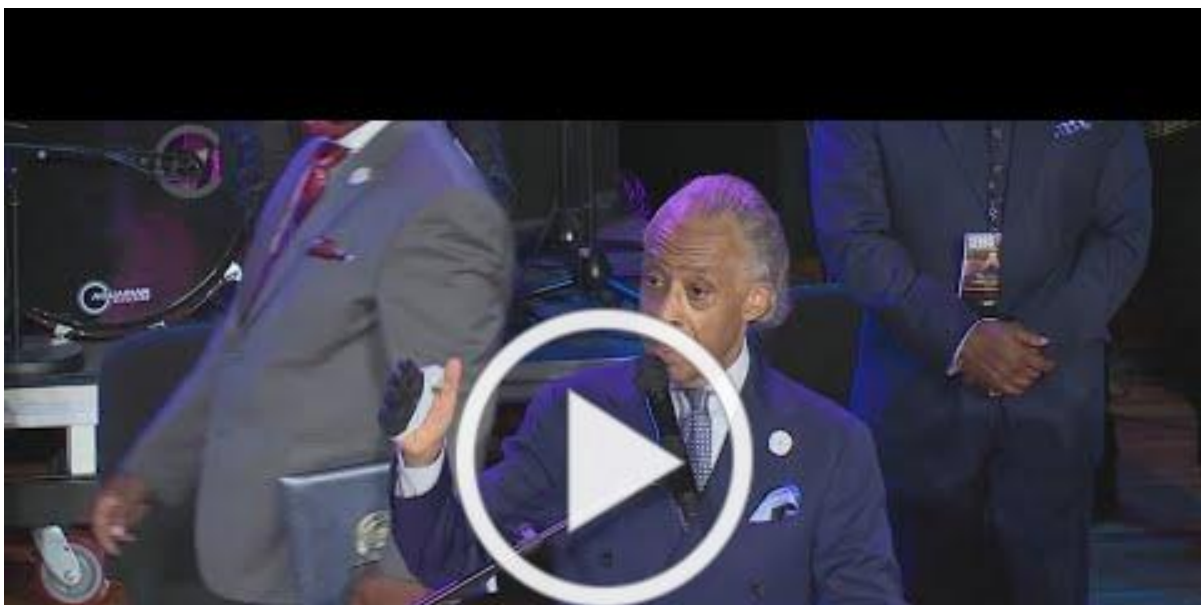
economic justice. Cherry reported on a trip that 20 members of the network made to Chicago Police headquarters, not only to press for justice in Minneapolis, but to call for police accountability in Chicago and around the country.

Dr. Jessie Fields (right), physician and front-line activist for democracy reform, gave the 100-plus Zoom attendees a glimpse of her experience as a doctor responding to the community's needs in the COVID-19 crisis. She spoke passionately about the connection between poverty and poor health, and between violence and the failure of the government to meet health needs. She said, "you have to acknowledge the grief and pain and hardship people have gone through in the pandemic."



Rev. Sharpton Delivers Eulogy at George Floyd Service

Watch the powerful eulogy that Rev. Al Sharpton delivered on Thursday. The service was held at North Central University's sanctuary in Minneapolis and was watched by millions across the country.





Independent Youth Leader says "Dallas, We Need to Talk about 'the Knee'"

Antoine Joyce, Vice President and City Leader of the All Stars Project in Dallas, Texas, penned a powerful editorial in the aftermath of recent events about his experience of being black and poor in America and his development as a leader.



Antoine Joyce

He said:

"Yes, the violence and destruction of property needs to stop. But so do the killings of citizens by police. So does the violence of hate against those who were as much a part of building this country as anyone else.

Elected leadership needs to speak words that unite, not divide. Or they need to stand down and make room for new leadership.

To move forward, Dallas needs to engage in a series of youth-led, cross-community conversations about 'the knee.' These will be angry conversations, I guarantee you, but they are necessary conversations if we are to end this cycle, change the system and finally, finally, finally heal the knee injury threatening our nation."

[Read his full editorial here .](#)

"I Can't Breathe" - A Poem by Caroline Donnola

I can't breathe.
I can't breathe.
I can't breathe.

For months it was
patients of all ages
from all walks of life
who couldn't breathe
because the coronavirus
devoured their lungs.
One hundred thousand Americans
Dead from this disease
because they couldn't breathe.

How ironic
now that the survivors try
to return to living
it's George Floyd
who couldn't breathe.
One black man—
one *more* black man—
George Floyd couldn't breathe.

For eight minutes
a knee on his neck.
For eight minutes
the bystanders pleaded.
For eight minutes
George Floyd begged.

How do you write a poem
about this kind of murder?
In iambic pentameter
it goes something like this:
I CAN not BREATHE
I CAN not BREATHE
I CAN'T.

First torment
then suffocation
then you are no more.

Caroline Donnola is the Executive Assistant to Jackie Salit and Independent Voting, and a longtime leader in the independent movement.



Survey Update

To date, 2900 independents from all 50 states have participated in Independent Voting's national survey "**Confronting a New Reality: Independents Speak Out .**"

If you haven't taken the survey yet, **please take it today** and share it with everyone in your network. The survey can be accessed at the top of the **Independent Voting Facebook page** and on **Twitter**.

Take the Survey

In a letter to donors and supporters in the Independent Voting network, Jackie Salit wrote, "At the center of our planning discussions was the question about whether the public generally or independents in particular would want to give their thoughts/ideas/fears/desires about how to self-govern in the midst of this calamity. We tried to shape questions that were sensitive to the environment but which also asked people to articulate their experience and to envision new pathways. At this point, I would say that people were not just willing. They were eager and outspoken."

In describing the results to date, she said "I take these results to be a mandate to continue our work on political reform, but not only that. I take them to be a

mandate to activate more people, to train more leaders and to fill the gap between governance and public need with some new ways of doing politics."

[Read Salit's complete letter here .](#)

Politics for the People Discusses Political Reform Movement

Dave Daley, author of *UNRIGGED: How Americans Are Battling Back to Save Democracy* was the guest of Cathy Stewart and the Politics for the People Book Club on May 31. The Zoom event was attended by over 100 people and broadcast on Facebook Live, and was a collaboration between Independent Voting and The People, where Cathy is currently the national field director.

Check out the video discussion below (Discussion begins at 4:10).



Voices in our Movement

Independent Voting's Administrative Assistant Julia Hemsworth wrote

this letter to New York's Governor Mario Cuomo.

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Washington Ave and State St
Albany, NY 12224

May 31, 2020



Dear Governor Cuomo,

My name is Julia Hemsworth. I am a Staten Island native, though I currently live in Brooklyn. I am writing in response to your ongoing statements about the partisan reactions to the COVID-19 pandemic, a situation that should obviously be handled outside of partisan biases.

I applaud your stance on the non-partisan nature of the pandemic. I agree that the two major parties are taking advantage of this crisis to grandstand and advertise themselves prior to a presidential election, and as an independent voter, it saddens and scares me to see both parties putting their private interests ahead of the American people. But I wonder how far you would be willing to go to denounce the two-party system and support a system of representation that truly works for the people, free from the influence of organized interests. I understand, of course, that you are a Democrat, and therefore you are subject to the regulations of the Democratic Party. However, you are also the Governor of New York, and you represent every citizen of the state – Democrat, Republican, independent, third-party – and their political affiliation does not absolve you of your duty to represent them. Frankly, while your comments are a step in the right direction, you could be doing more.

[Read Julia's complete letter here.](#)

Profile in Independence

Robin Nelson

I'm Robin Wilson Nelson, and I've practiced independent voting for several decades. I originally registered as a Democrat because that was my parents' party and at the time, I had to choose a party. I was also involved in campaigns for Democratic candidates before I could vote because my parents were campaign leaders, notably for Jim Hunt. I was heavily involved in both of Harvey Gantt's efforts to unseat Jesse Helms. Campaigning was exciting to me, but the tactics used by Jesse Helms' campaign, the RNC and the DNC during Gantt's campaigns left a metallic taste in my mouth. I didn't like it, so as soon as I realized North Carolina offered an "Unaffiliated" option allowing primary voting, I switched my registration. Now I vote the person.



As an independent, I've worked locally with City Councils, Boards of Aldermen, Boards of Education and such to promote consensus decisions about impactful issues like gentrification, school reassignments based on race and then socio-economic demographics when using race was deemed unlawful. The people I worked with viewed me as a consensus builder. I was asked to run for various offices, as a Republican and as a Democrat. I declined because I can't fully subscribe to either party's platforms.

Increasingly, I see each party's platforms devolving into the promotion of positions that aren't held by a growing number of the voters. Notably as a result, for at least seven years **more voters have identified themselves as independents than as either Republican or Democratic**.

In the News

Read Mainers for Open Elections Joe Pickering's opinion piece, "**Maine Voices: Open Primaries Should Head List of Crisis-driven Election Reforms**" (*Portland Press Herald*)

Legal Counsel for the Independent Voter Project, Chad Peace, **discusses the lawsuit** against the state of California for disenfranchising more than five million voters in the presidential election by failing to conduct an open primary for presidential elections. (*KUSI News*)

Arnold Schwarzenegger's editorial, "**The America I Love Needs to Do Better**," is subheaded, "Patriotism isn't just the blind love of our flag. It is the work we do to improve our country for every American." (*The Atlantic*)

Read "**The Country We Make**," by Doug Balder, architect and a founding member of the All Stars Project. (*The Medium*)

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Give us a call today!

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