



ndependentvoting.org The Hub

March 2, 2021

Leaders of the independent movement were prominent at the Red and Blue Carpet Premiere of the new documentary **The ReUnited States**, which highlights the stories of Americans working to address the racial and political divide in our country. Jackie Salit, President of Independent Voting, interviewed Independent Voting's Dr. Jessie Fields, a primary care physician in Harlem and Nick Troiano, Executive Director of Unite America about why independents are so critical in transforming the politics in the United States. You can find this segment at about the 23:00 mark of **the video** below (click on the image). Jackie also introduced Greg Orman, former independent candidate for Governor of Kansas and a leading light in independent politics.





Dr. Jessie Fields



Jacqueline Salit



Nick Troiano



Greg Orman

The Rise of Independent Voters — A Panel Discussion

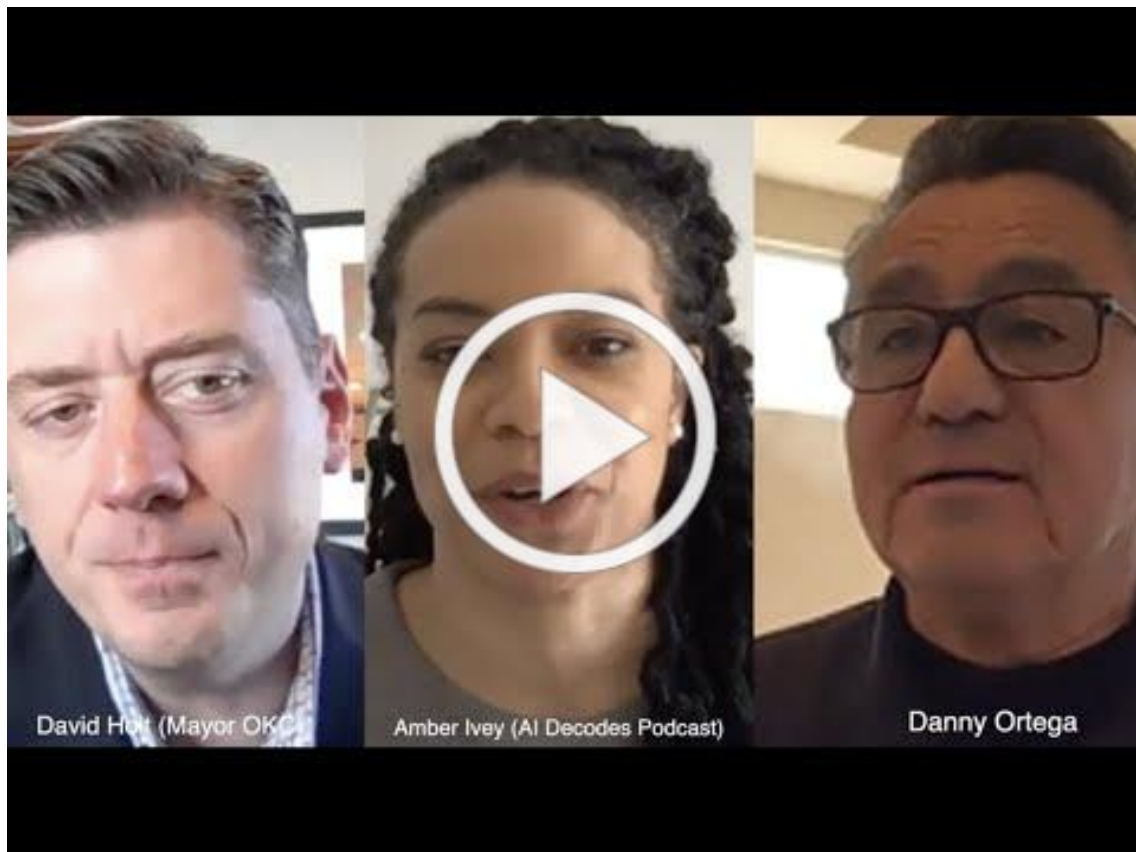
Open Primaries, in conjunction with the Princeton Electoral Innovation Lab, kicked off their 2021 Virtual Discussions Series with a wonderful Zoom event on the groundbreaking new report from the Open Primaries Education Fund — **The Next Great Migration: The Rise of Independent Voters**. The event was attended by over 200 people.

Joining Jeremy Gruber and John Opdycke, the co-authors of the report from Open Primaries, were David Holt, Mayor of Oklahoma City, and Attorney Danny Ortega,

long-time civil rights activist. Ortega, a Democrat, and Holt, a Republican, added their voices to the findings of the report and spoke to the significance of the rise of independent voters. Amber Ivy, former independent candidate in Maryland's 7th Congressional District and host of the **AI Decodes the System** podcast, moderated the discussion, which included a lively question and answer session.

Danny Ortega summed up the proceedings well when he observed "Independents are the answer to fighting polarization in this country."

Watch the complete video of the event .

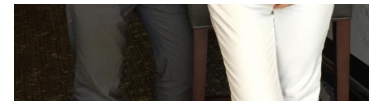


Independents to Biden: Reach Out to Us

With an astounding 50% of Americans now identifying as independents, according to the latest Gallup poll, Thom Reilly has a critical message for President Joe Biden in his opinion piece, "Four Ways the Biden Administration Should Reach Out to Independents" published by *The Fulcrum* . Reilly is Professor of Public Affairs at Arizona State University, former chancellor of



the Nevada System of Higher Education and co-author of a chapter, along with Independent Voting President Jackie Salit, in *Democracy Unchained*.



Thom Reilly and Jackie Salit

[Read his opinion piece here.](#)

Local Roundup

New Hampshire

An update from Tiani Coleman, president of New Hampshire

Independent Voters: New Hampshire Independent Voters have been tracking, testifying and responding to a couple of New Hampshire bills directly related to the specific voting rights of independent (undeclared) voters.



On February 17, the New Hampshire House Election Law Committee held an executive session to vote on whether they found **New Hampshire HB 86** to be expedient or inexpedient to legislate. Tiani Coleman, Cathy Stewart and many other independents had testified against HB 86. On January 22, because it seeks to fully close the New Hampshire primaries by requiring voters to register with a party 30 days before the primary in order to be eligible to vote in the party primary, in addition to abolishing same-day voter registration and making it harder for college students to vote in elections. In the executive session, the New Hampshire House Election Law Committee voted 15-5 to retain the bill. This means that HB 86 cannot go to the House Floor for a vote, unless and until, the committee reviews it further and votes it out of committee. The good news is that the bill, for the time being, has been stalled.

Also on February 17, a public hearing was held on New Hampshire's **HB 151**. A couple of people, including Tiani Coleman, testified in favor of HB 151, which, if passed, would make it easier for independent voters to maintain their independent status when voting in primary elections. NH HB 151 would automatically return independent voters to "undeclared" status after they vote in a primary election. Currently, when independent voters in New Hampshire take a party ballot in a primary election, they will be considered members of that party unless they specifically fill out a card or notify election officials when they leave that they intend to remain as ("return to") independent ("undeclared") status. Thus, the bill would honor the autonomy of

independent voters by assuming they intend to remain independent unless they explicitly indicate otherwise. Nobody testified against HB 151. The committee will vote on this bill in the near future.

Oregon Open Primaries — More Choice, More Voice, More Power to Voters

Thanks to Mike DeWolf for this report:

Election primaries only work well if there's a level playing field. Free, open, head-to-head competition among all candidates. Free, open access for all voters to participate.



Unfortunately, that's not the system in Oregon today. To run in the state-sponsored primary, candidates must be members of a major party — the Democratic or Republican Party. The Independent Party and other third parties hold primaries or nominating processes on their own, outside the state-sponsored process.

A large share of voters are barred as well. To vote in primary races for statewide executive and legislative offices — such as governor, attorney general, and state senator — voters must register with one of the two major parties. Voters who decline to join a party or who join a third party instead are shut out. That's almost 40 percent of Oregon voters!

Primaries are taxpayer-funded, publicly administered elections that must be accessible to *all voters and candidates*. No longer should voters and candidates be required to join a private organization — a political party — to participate in a publicly funded election!

Oregon Open Primaries is a nonpartisan team of volunteers working hard to put an initiative on the ballot in 2022. An initiative petition will be submitted in late spring, followed by major fundraising, signature gathering, and a 2022 campaign. The second in a series of online events was held on February 18, and our team and momentum are growing fast! If you missed it, a recording of the one-hour event is available [here](#). The event included presentations by members of our team and featured speakers Jeremy Gruber, Senior Vice-president for Open Primaries and Shea Seigert from the Alaska "Yes on 2" Campaign. Follow us at: www.oregonopenprimaries.org, and on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

Update from Independent Pennsylvanians

On February 21, Independent Pennsylvanians held our bi-monthly statewide meeting, where we discussed best strategies for reaching out to fellow Pennsylvania independents as well as how to influence the PA legislature to pass important legislation, such as open primaries and fair districting. Our meetings are a dynamic mix of



philosophy (why do we care about what we are fighting for? what do we think about what is going on politically, culturally?) and practical (best strategies? where should we use our resources?) brainstorming to strengthen the voice, voting rights and visibility of independents throughout our state. To stay in the loop and help build our movement in PA, contact us at www.paindependents.org

Politics for the People Conversation: In the Balance of Power

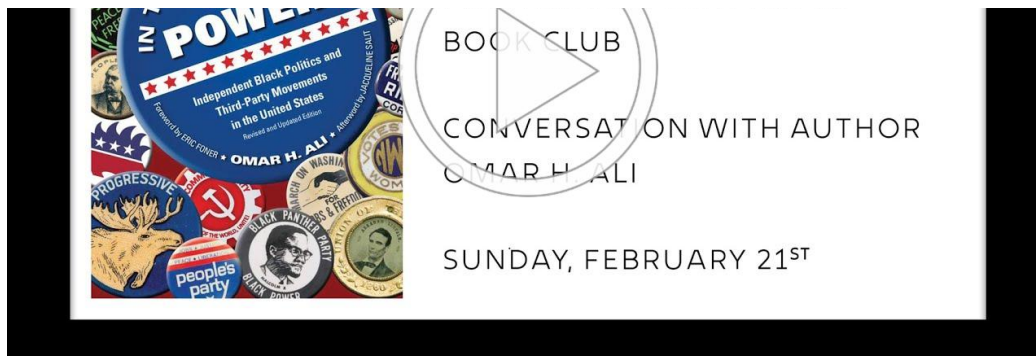
The **Politics for the People Book Club** 's February 21 Conversation featured Dr. Omar Ali's *In the Balance of Power: Independent Black Politics and Third- Party Movements* . Released in 2008 and then again in 2020 with an updated introduction and forward by Independent Voting President Jackie Salit, the book traces the undercurrent of political independence among African Americans throughout American history.

Politics for the People host (and Independent Voting's Vice President for National Development Cathy Stewart) asked Professor Ali why this history was not more accessible.

Ali responded: "If there weren't movements of ordinary people we wouldn't know a lot of this social history. There's an interplay between those in power and those outside of power and it's in that combination that we receive these stories, so I think it's mostly that we haven't been powerful enough yet."

You can find the full conversation below.





P4P members say:

Omar H. Ali's *In the Balance of Power: Independent Black Politics and Third-Party Movements in the United States* could carry the title, What I Should Have Learned in High School, But Didn't. Thankfully, Ali fills the gap.



Frank Fear

[Read Frank's full piece in the LA Progressive](#)



Allen Cox

This book should be part of every political science's curriculum. But it won't, because of who wrote it and the issue that it's raising, using independent politics as a vehicle for black empowerment. It took someone like Omar Ali who knows something about that as a long-time supporter and builder of the independent political movement to do it.

For more member comments, [check out the Politics for the People blog](#)

Submit Your Profile: Why Are You an Independent?

We've just launched a special component to The Hub — a new Instagram gallery of Profiles in Independence! [Check out the new gallery here !](#)



Send us your profile (100-150 words) to gmandell@independentvoting.org, along with a photo, and we'll post it. Share your journey with other independents by

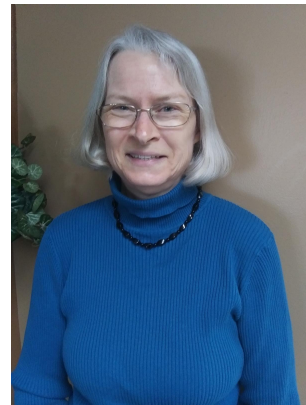
writing a little about yourself and why you're an independent.

Profiles in Independence

Jeanette Schultz • Dayton, Ohio

I am an independent-minded woman who rejects party *ownership* !

For over 20 years I voted either party, mostly to vote against someone rather than for them. In the Ohio 2020 primary I declared my Independence Day by asking for an issues-only ballot and became an unaffiliated voter. In effect, I disenfranchised myself until the general election. If there are no issues or tax levies, then I can't vote at all.



Jeanette Schultz

I've studied women's suffrage, so as a woman, voting is not optional knowing how many people fought for my right to vote. I grew up in Montana, the home of Jeannette Rankin, the first woman to hold federal office in 1916, so I cannot let her down either.

I was not involved in political activities until 2017 when I joined the Dayton League of Women Voters. Since then, I've learned that voting restrictions and suppression tactics cost others their vote, too.

Ohio is set to eliminate its partisan gerrymandering and redraw districts in 2021 to ensure fairer elections, better candidates, and competitive races. Ohio's motto is "With God All Things Are Possible," so we *can* fix this!

In the News

Read Independent Voting Counsel Harry Kresky's op-ed **There's One Democracy Reform Best Suited to Stopping Trump's Comeback** . (*The Fulcrum*)

Read **March vote set for HR 1 as both parties harden democracy reform postures**, by David Hawkings. (*The Fulcrum*)

Open Primaries President John Opdycke appears on **The Michael Smerconish Program** to talk about the need for open primaries in America right now, the rise of independent voters and the **new op-ed** he wrote with former Congress members David Jolly and Patrick Murphy. (*Smerconish.com*)

This piece, **Legislators Get Caught Up in the Trap of Partisan Primaries** , was **originally published** on the American Enterprise Institute's blog and has been republished on IVN with permission from the author. (*Independent Voter Network*)

Read Chris Craiker's Letter to the Editor, **Why We Need More Independent Voters and Thinkers** . (*Napa Valley Register*)

Unite America's Nick Troiano appeared on **Morning Joe** to talk about his column, **Why America Doesn't Have the Third Party It Wants** . (*The Hill*)

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