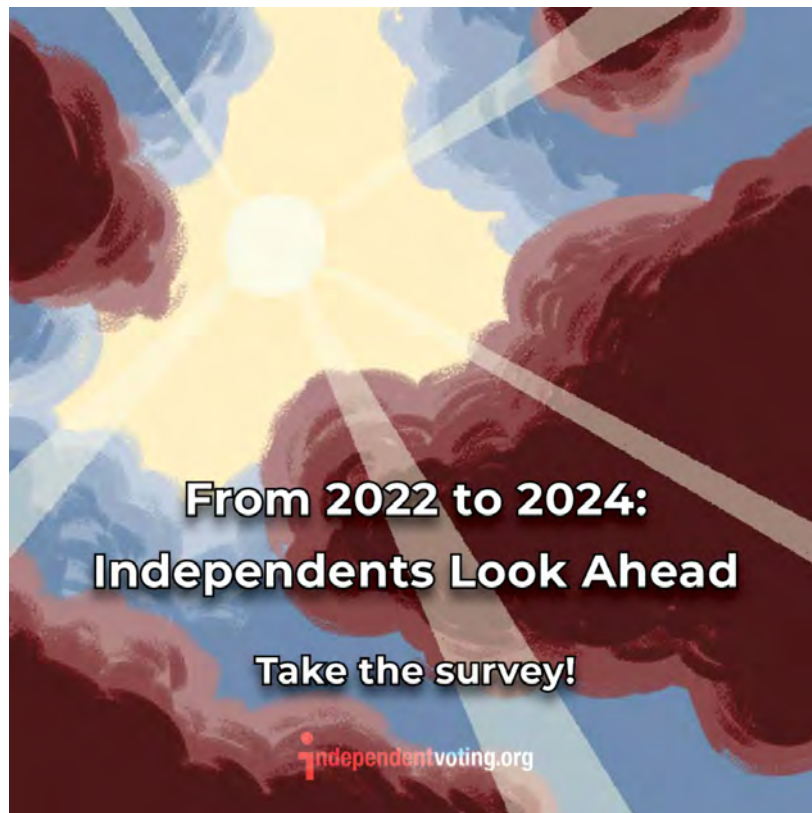




independentvoting.org **The Hub**

April 5, 2022

From 2022 to 2024: Independents Look Ahead with a New Survey!



Independent Voting has launched a new survey so Independents can speak out on some of the key issues confronting our nation!

Americans are experiencing one crisis after the other – whether it's the pandemic or war; inflation or economic insecurity; what's happening in schools or the level of polarization. More and more Americans are concerned that the two parties are putting partisanship before the needs of the country, and this is creating an unhealthy environment.

We believe that what independents have to say is critical at this juncture. There are tens of millions of us across the country — somewhere between 40-50% of the country according to Gallup. We are Americans that do not want to identify with the two parties. While the media and the political scientists like to act as if we don't exist, or that we are closet partisans, at Independent Voting we believe that independents need to be heard — to be more visible and more powerful. We want to know what you think as we look ahead.

Take the survey here!

Independent Voting's surveys have become somewhat of a tradition — an opportunity for independents to speak out and voice our concerns.

In 2018 Independent Voting conducted our "**9 Questions for the 44%**" survey and 5,000 independents weighed in on questions about independent voters that have now become a critical part of the national conversation. Among other things, the survey highlighted the number one answer people gave for why they were independent: that the two major parties are failing our country and putting their own party interests ahead of the interests of the American people.

In 2020 we homed in on the coronavirus crisis with "**Confronting a New Reality: Independents Speak Out**," and spotlighted independents' views regarding weaknesses and biases in our political system, how the 2020 presidential election was affected, and what independents wanted to do to develop our political strength in the years ahead.

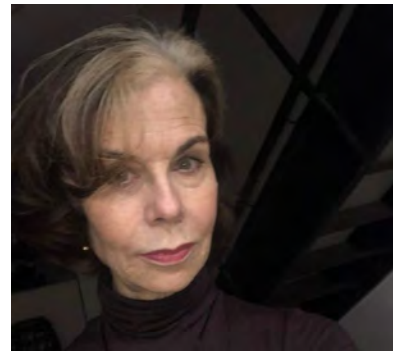
In the current survey, we are expanding this conversation and providing a forum for independents to share thoughts as we head towards the next presidential election in 2024.

Help us reach our 5,000 survey goal by sharing the survey widely (Find the survey on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) or from the [campaign page](#) of [Independent Voting's website](#) or [download the survey here](#)).

Join our survey team! Contact Gwen at gmandell@independentvoting.org for more information.

Independent Voters: Rising, Real & Ready

CNN's Michael Smerconish joined Independent Voting president Jacqueline Salit and Open Primaries' John Opdycke for a lively discussion about independents. Smerconish, who is an independent himself, has been a strong advocate for opening the primaries and other reforms that would shine a light on the growing number of people in the United States who are declaring ourselves independent.



Jacqueline Salit



John Opdycke

In her opening question, Salit pointed to Independent Voting's 2018 survey, where over 80% of the respondents said that they did not feel independents got the respect they deserved (and 68% felt that a higher value was placed on being a Democrat or Republican) and asked Smerconish to speak to why there is such a push to deny the reality that so many independents become independent for a reason.

Said Smerconish: "Because it doesn't fit the media narrative and it doesn't fit the objective which is profit driven and only works when you can pit people against one another, namely Rs against Ds, Red state vs. Blue state. There's a whole cottage industry that exists, subsists based on the narrative of the two parties fighting one another, and bridging the gap and trying to talk about common denominators and areas we have in common, is totally at odds with this."

Check out the full discussion below and read Sean Griffith's report on the discussion, "[Why the Media Lies To Us About Independent Voters.](#)"
(*Independent Voter Network*)

OPEN PRIMARIES VIRTUAL DISCUSSIONS SERIES

INDEPENDENT VOTERS: RISING, REAL & READY

w/CN Michael Smerconish

Hosted by
Jacqueline Salit &
John Opdycke

The graphic features a yellow background with a white play button icon in the center. A portrait of Michael Smerconish is visible in the bottom left corner. The text is arranged in a clear, hierarchical layout, starting with the series name at the top, followed by the main title, the guest's name, and the hosts' names at the bottom.

America Talks

Thousands of Americans will be participating on April 21 and April 23 in **America Talks**, a powerful national virtual event that invites Americans to connect in conversation across our political divides.

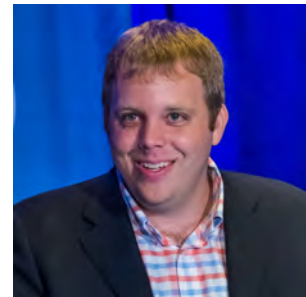


In its second year, America Talks believes that by engaging one-to-one and in small groups across America's cultural and political divides, we remind ourselves that the "other" is – just like us – a person with family, friends, hopes, fears, and values. America Talks provides an opportunity for Americans to gain this fresh and healing perspective – either directly or vicariously.

Independent Voting is a hosting partner for this event, joining with over 160 other partners to promote and participate in this two-day series of events.

Here is what Pearce Godwin, the founder of the Listen First Project had to say about the importance of having independent voters participate in America Talks:

"Independent voters have found belonging outside the political conflict, which gives you a special ability to connect with fellow Americans gripped by partisan animosity. Unbridled by party allegiance, independents can most effectively fight back against cable news, politicians, and social media dividing us. It's time for all of us to show up for each other and for the country we love. Independents have an opportunity to show us how it's done."



Pearce Godwin

Jacqueline Salit commented:

"Independent Voters, simply by choosing to identify as independents, are making a statement about the partisan culture of American political life. We don't like the way the parties weaponize our differences. America Talks is opening its doors to independents to join with other Americans from all walks of life for honest conversations about how we see ourselves and each other, and how we can get on with the work of building our country."

You can register for a conversation here

The following week, hosting partners will be holding events as part of a national week of conversation. Events will be open to all who participated in America's Talks. Events will be promoted through **Citizen's Connect**.



Independent Voting will be holding its Spokesperson Training during this week to help bring independents' voice more fully into American political life. **Apply for the spokesperson training here.**

Disillusioned with Democrats and GOP....

Freelance reporter Josephine Lee spent several weeks on a search to investigate why so many Americans are becoming independent. After speaking to Jacqueline Salit, she spoke to a number of independents who shared their thoughts, including seven members of the Independent Voting network (pictured below).

What resulted was an extensive profile of independents which appears on Truthout.org, titled "**Disillusioned with Democrats and GOP, Independents Now Largest Voter group in the US.**"

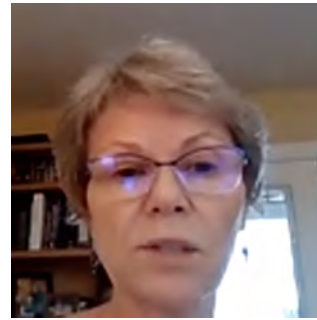
Commented Salit in the article, "Independents began to see that the control of the electoral process by the two parties was fused with the larger economic and social circumstances in the country. They began to feel that this was a country being run by a set of insiders, that the insiders had control over the political apparatus, and that unless and until we could change and transform the political apparatus, we weren't going to be able to address issues of economic instability."

In addition to documenting the long-term trend towards independence that is quickly becoming a reality in the current political landscape, Lee skillfully captures the diversity and variety of voices that are heard in the growing independent movement.

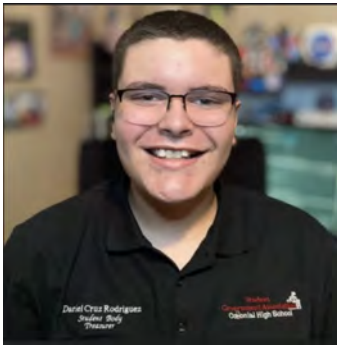
Read the full article.



Ron Dumas,
Asheville, North Carolina



Perri Benemelis
Mesa, Arizona



Dariel Cruz-Rodriguez
Orlando, Florida



Jarell Corley
Chicago, Illinois



Hugh McNichol
Lansing, Michigan



Jose Torres,
Jacksonville, Florida



Amber Hysell
Chattanooga, Tennessee

Want to Help Make Independents Visible?

**Join the Spokesperson Training
and learn how to tell your story!**

Monday, April 25 6:30pm ET

Here's a testimonial from Lisa Rice, an independent political strategist in Washington DC. She is an influential advocate for cancer care policy, women's leadership and empowerment, and political reform.



"The opportunity to discuss techniques for increasing exposure of the independent movement in American politics with like-minded individuals in small groups can't be missed. Small group discussion and a thorough, unrushed Q&A with Jackie Salit is THE highlight of the workshop."

If you'd like to apply for the upcoming training, [fill out and submit this application today.](#)

Dialing for Independents

by Sean Garrett, San Francisco California

Over the years, it's been my pleasure to reach out to other independents by phone. People who express interest in Independent Voting's invitation to join our nationwide network often receive calls from volunteers like me.

People in our network of activists and spokespersons come from all kinds of backgrounds and they register to vote in a myriad of strategic ways.



Sean Garrett

Small-"i" independents are figuring out new ways to address all kinds of issues and to make great ideas into real advances. A big part of all of this is questioning assumptions about who we all are. Historical references aside, it's inspiring just how many of our fellow independents are simply *moving beyond* polarizing labels/identifiers such as conservative vs. liberal, right vs. left, and so on.

Independents also share deep concerns about the ways that the Democratic and Republican parties (and the news media) deliberately whip up a phenomenon that could be described as "kitchen table wars." Among the independents I've spoken with, many wonder how it came to be that familiar political disagreements between family and friends can devolve into denunciation or disowning of loved ones, or worse.

When you phone someone for the first time, you'll likely hear their relief at *finally* having a space where they can speak on what matters to them as an independent. I'm glad to report that there is growing interest in devising "big tents" that are welcoming and could manifest the constructive power of the independent movement, locally and nationally.

Good news, Independent Voting has a new survey! I'm excited and I encourage you to **take the survey!** You can be sure we're prominently featuring it in our welcome calls. If you're interested in doing some welcome calls or surveying other independents, please get in touch with Independent Voting's Director of National Outreach, Gwen Mandell: gmandell@independentvoting.org.

A Final Step for Semi-Open Primaries in Maine

Last year saw tremendous progress to bring semi-open primaries to Maine, with sizable numbers of Republicans joining with a majority of Democrats to pass L.D. 231, "An Act to Establish Semi-Open Primaries" 27-7 in the Senate and 92-52 in the House.

But, the L.D. 231 is not over the finish line yet. Due to the fiscal note attached to the bill – a one-time cost of \$200,000 for printing and mailing the additional ballots – the bill is still going through the appropriations process.



Kaitlyn LaGasse

Said Kaitlin LaCasse, Campaign Manager for Open Primaries Maine, "While we are cautiously optimistic, Open Primaries Maine isn't taking anything for granted and continues to work with partners around the state and in the legislature to make sure the bill gets funded."

Lacasse urged Maine voters to take 30 seconds to fill out an automatically generated email to legislators encouraging them to advocate for funding for

semi-open primaries

In a Letter to the Editor to the *Portland Press Herald*, Annie Keller, executive director of the League of Women Voters of Maine commented: "What would it say if this bill actually motivated more Mainers to participate in primary elections, but we refused to pay for the ballots to allow them to do so? The cost of printing more ballots is a small price to pay for a more inclusive democracy."

Read the [League's letter here](#) and an [article in the *Maine Monitor* here](#).

Profiles in Independence

Sandi Hebley, Dallas, Texas



Sandi Hebley

WHY I'M AN INDEPENDENT — I grew up in small- town Louisiana. My parents explained to me as a teenager that they preferred the Republican party candidates, but they registered as Democrats so that they could vote in the Democratic primaries. They knew the Democrats would win in the end, and they wanted to have some say in the eventual winner; but in the regular elections they always voted for the Republican. This began my disillusionment with the games political parties played and caused people to play.

Over the years in Texas, I played the game, too. I didn't want to "join" a party but had to choose one in order to vote in primaries. I was always the "weird, radical liberal" (rebel) in my family and in most circles around me. Fast forward to 2015-16, and I was (am) a Bernie Sanders fan. I still believe he spoke to the same anger and anxiety in people that Trump hooked into, and he might have had a chance to beat Trump because he had actual plans to address the concerns. BUT... the Democratic Party had chosen Hillary Clinton as their standard-bearer and did all they could to undermine Bernie. Again, I was faced with the games the party was playing. That Mitch McConnell could say openly that he was "100% focused" on stopping anything the Biden Administration might try to accomplish, regardless of what is good for the country, really

cemented my aversion to the parties. The only goal is to obtain and/or maintain power for the few at the top and to heck with everyone else.

I am too much of a rebel to want some organization to tell me what I should think/believe or how I should vote. I want to vote for an issue or a candidate, not for a label. I have enjoyed interacting with others who are also free thinkers. I have no problem with the fact that others might disagree with my preferences or ideas; I believe we can support each other's right to be individuals.

In the News

Independent Voting president Jacqueline Salit wrote in an op-ed how the Democratic Party's control of the process derailed democracy in Massachusetts after Danielle Allen, the first African American woman to seek the Democratic Party nomination for governor of Massachusetts and a leading voice on the crisis in American democracy suspended her campaign. Read "**A Caucus Casualty and a Serious Loss for Democracy.**" (*Boston Herald*)

The Oregon secretary of state has certified a proposed ballot measure that would guarantee all voters and candidates have the option to participate in the state's publicly-funded primary elections. **Read IVN update here.** (*Independent Voter Network*)

Read "**Protect Voting Rights and Open Primaries,**" by Jason Barker. (*Santa Fe New Mexican*)

Aaron James, founder of Tennessee Independent Voters wrote a **Letter to the Editor** calling for primaries to remain open in the state. James' letter was one of three posted in response to a question by the publication "Should Tennessee Primaries Be Closed?" (*Johnson City-Press*)

Chris Bates of Whitesburg, Kentucky wrote an opinion piece declaring "**It's Time for Open Primaries in Kentucky.**" (*Frankfort State-Journal*)

Read "**Editorial: primary election change is a good Idea,** by the Bozeman Daily Chronicle Editorial Board." (*Bozeman Daily Chronicle*)

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