



## Independent Voting.org Launches Campaign to Lobby Congress

June, 2011

Dear g.,

Independentvoting.org's new campaign calling on Congress to conduct hearings into the structural biases against independent voters has gotten off to a promising and eventful start. We're happy to share with you some of the early highlights in our new newsletter about the campaign. **Make sure to send us your stories, pictures and letters to Congress as we grow our campaign together!** Democracy wins when independents are included.

### Activists Pilot Meetings With Members of Congress in 3 States

**Michael Lewis** and **William Bowe** from **Independent Kentucky (IK)** met with Congressman John Yarmouth. IK has been leading a fight to open the primaries. Said Lewis *"We highlighted how Kentucky and other states in this nation are keeping willing voters out of the process. We informed him we are going to bring him petitions and postcards from people in his district who support these issues."* Rep. Yarmouth acknowledged that open primaries create a more representative government.

### Congressman Towns Says Yes!



**New York County Independence Party** Chair **Cathy Stewart**, and Vice Chair, **Alvaader Frazier, Esq.** met with **Congressman Edolphus Towns** on June 7<sup>th</sup>. Rep. Towns from Brooklyn, who is very familiar with the grassroots organizing record of the Independence Party in New York City, is a member of the Subcommittee on Government Organization, Efficiency and Financial Management. Towns unhesitatingly said that he would like to help,

that Congress should hold hearings to explore the barriers independents face, and that it is important to work to expand the number of people that are participating. He indicated that if he were still the chair of the committee, he would just hold the hearings, but since he is not, he has to request hearings. Frazier commented: *"It is left to us ordinary Americans to work for a more perfect democracy and the inclusion of all citizens in the democratic processes of our government. This campaign will take us closer to the structural reforms we as progressive independent leaders have been working/fighting and demanding for decades. Congressman Towns support signals that this campaign can succeed and Congressional hearings are in reach."*

**Catana Barnes** of **Independent Voters of Nevada (IVON)** met with the chief of staff for Senator Dean Heller who promised to brief Senator Heller about IVON's wishes for him to push for Congressional Hearings. The staffer confirmed that sending letters to the Senator will really make a difference, so Catana is hitting the streets to gather dozens of letters.

### The Bill of Particulars

**The Bill of Particulars:** Alvaader, Cathy, Michael and Catana all gave their

Representatives copies of the "Bill of Particulars" - ***A Call for Congressional Hearings: VOTER RIGHTS VS PARTY RIGHTS: INDEPENDENT VOTERS TREATED AS SECOND CLASS CITIZENS*** which highlights the various ways independents are disadvantaged. Click [here](#) to read.

The Bill of Particulars was developed by a committee led by **Steve Richardson** of **VA**, and included **Kim Wright, SD, Carl Farmer, RI; Bryan Puertas, NY** and **Catana Barnes, NV**. Great Work!

## Grassroots Organizing: The Key to Success

**Mike Pickering** and **Murray Dabby** of **Georgia Independent Voters** collected 24 signed letters in an hour and a half outside the Virginia-Highland Arts & Crafts Festival fairground in Atlanta. Dabby noted that many people, Democrats and Republicans included, were responsive to the call for hearings. They also met many strong independents who were glad to learn of a national effort to organize independents.

Key to our success to win Congressional hearings is a grassroots letter writing campaign. **Download the letter [here](#) and send to your Congress member.** Add to the letter or change it. **Send it to your network.** Ask folks at work to sign letters, get signatures at July 4th barbecues and at other family and friend events.



Summer fairs are in swing and **Michael Lewis, Alex Kemble** and the **Independent Kentucky** team set up a booth at both the New Castle Spring Fling and the Hillview City Fair. Housed with an attractive **Independent Kentucky** banner and a flat screen TV which featured Lewis on CNN talking about open primaries, the crew gathered dozens of signatures on letters to Congress and a petition to support open primaries.

There are countless ways to reach out to others and build this campaign. **Bob Friedman of Independent Alabama** sent an email to his network asking them to write to their Congress members.

At a house party held in **San Francisco, California** at the home of **Aaron Hammon, Jason Olson** of **Independentvoice.org** reported that most attendees signed letters on the spot and also promised to email the letter to their networks.

100 Letters were signed at the **New York City Independence Party's** Spring Reception last Monday which honored several South Carolina leaders for their role in litigation which stopped the Republican Party from closing the primaries.

Nancy Ross and Gwen Mandell  
**Independentvoice.org**  
(212) 609-2800

[Find us on Facebook](#) 

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

[Forward to a Friend](#)

 **SafeUnsubscribe**

This email was sent to gmandell@cuiip.org by [national@independentvoting.org](mailto:national@independentvoting.org) | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Committee for a Unified Independent Party | 225 Broadway, Suite 2010 | New York | NY | 10007