

\_\_\_\_\_(Insert Organization Name)<sup>1</sup>

## **Candidate Questionnaire**

### **Preamble**

While independents span the ideological spectrum, what unifies us is our enthusiastic support for structural political reforms that move political power away from the parties and into the hands of the voters. The independent political movement is building day by day—and from the bottom up. It is a movement for *voter empowerment and freedom* at every stage and level of elections, from primaries to general and from local to state and national. We have challenged the entrenched political machines and fought for direct democracy reforms such as initiative, referendum and recall. Today, we are focused on reforms such as nonpartisan “Top Two” primaries, nonpartisan redistricting and other anti-corruption efforts.

Independent activists around the country are working to change the *culture of American politics* by disrupting the incentives and structures that maintain politics as usual. With this in mind, we invite you to respond to the concerns of independent voters, concerns that are deeply important to us and rarely if ever addressed in our current political system. Our questionnaire is designed to help us identify potential partners in the building of this broader reform movement.

Thank you for taking the time to respond to our questionnaire.

### **Questions for Candidate**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Campaign Manager:

\_\_\_\_\_

Bus. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address:

\_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Occupation:

\_\_\_\_\_

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<sup>1</sup> [Organization] is an affiliate of IndependentVoting.org, the country’s leading strategy and organizing center for independent activists, with a national headquarters in New York City and local activist networks in 40 states.

Educational background:

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What office are you running for?

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Party registration?

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Why are you running for this office? What is your core campaign message?

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**What do you think about the following issues?**

- 1) Independent voters—referred to as nonpartisan, other, etc.—have been the fastest growing segment of the electorate for over a decade. Why do you think so many \_\_\_\_\_(insert name of state residents; for example: Californians) are becoming independents? What impact do you see independents having on the political process in \_\_\_\_\_(name of state)? \_\_\_\_\_

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- 2) Independents are often mistakenly referred to as “centrists” or “moderates.” However, they actually span the ideological spectrum. The unifying issue for independents is a rejection of partisanship and enthusiastic support for political reforms that move political power from the parties to the voters. What is your opinion on partisanship?

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3) Open Primaries: In some states, independents and unaffiliated voters cannot vote in primary elections. Does your state have closed or open primaries? Closed \_\_\_ Open \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_

4) Does your state have nonpartisan or partisan voter registration? Nonpartisan \_\_\_ Partisan \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_ Do you support nonpartisan registration? If so, why?

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5) Nonpartisan Elections: Reforms like nonpartisan elections and "Top Two" allow all voters to choose from among all the candidates. Everyone participates in the first round of voting and voters can pick the candidate of their choice regardless of party affiliation. The top two vote getters go on to the general election. Do you support nonpartisan elections? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Please explain:

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6) Nonpartisan Election Administrations: Election administrations from the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) to state election commissions and boards of elections are often bipartisan in structure; made up of members of the two major parties. These bodies oversee the election process. In some states the election administration is in the hands of an election official allied with a political party. Nationally, independent voters as well as independent candidates for public office face many barriers to full participation in the electoral process. The barriers range from being locked out of primaries in over 20 states, packed into gerrymandered districts where their votes cannot have an impact, to the fact that election oversight agencies are comprised of only Democrats and Republicans. What type of election administration does your state have? Do you

support nonpartisan administration, or at least proportionate representation, of independents on election boards or commissions?

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7) Initiative and Referendum: Does your state allow for citizen initiatives? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_ If no, do you support initiatives to open up the democratic process? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

8) Redistricting reform: Most states allow the state legislature to draw their own districts. A reform movement is gaining strength that would set up independent redistricting commissions. Do you support an independent redistricting commission? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Why or why not? \_\_\_\_\_

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9) Do you support same day voter registration? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ Explain:

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10) Does the district you seek to represent cover racially, economically, ethnically and politically diverse neighborhoods? Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_ I don't know \_\_\_ Do you see yourself as a representative of all people regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation or political affiliation? Please explain:

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11) How do you see your campaign goals enhancing the goal of political process reforms that decrease the power of the parties and puts the power back in the hands of the voters?

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Please sign and date this questionnaire:

Candidate signature:

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_