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AN OPEN LETTER TO PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA FROM THE INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT

Independent voters were proud to be a vital element of your winning coalition during the presidential campaign of 2008. Your appeal to Americans—that the country must move beyond partisanship and towards a more participatory and open political culture—resonated strongly with independent voters, who have been voicing these concerns for many years. Your invitation to all Americans to reshape our country's future—*without regard to political affiliation*—was a refreshing change for independents and Americans of every political persuasion.

During the presidential primary season, independents played a crucial role in bolstering the change-oriented movement that led to your nomination. By virtue of being able to vote in the primaries and caucuses in 33 states, independents cast the votes that gave your campaign its margin, and continued to support you in the general election.

You asked the American people to partner with you to realize the dream of our democracy, to form a “more perfect union.” Let us strengthen that partnership as you begin your first term and work together to expand the voting rights of independents.

We raise this not as some kind of “political payback” for our support, but because we believe, insofar as the presidential election itself became a partial reform, this needs to be protected and expanded for future elections.

We, the undersigned, appeal to you to support the full inclusion of independent voters in all primaries and caucuses for election to federal office in all 50 states.

Whereas:

- In states with partisan registration, unaffiliated voters are now 24.8% of the electorate, up 36% since 1992;
- Nationally, nearly 40% of all voters self-identify as independents, regardless of whether they are registered into a party;
- In presidential elections, independents can participate in primaries and caucuses in only 33 states. In 17 states, they are denied access;

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- In numerous states, independents can vote in the presidential primaries, but not in other statewide primaries. Only 21 states ensure the inclusion of independents in Congressional primary elections;
- As independents gain in numbers and influence, there has been an intensified effort by major party leaders in states that have open primaries—e.g., Idaho, Mississippi, Virginia and Washington—to close the primaries to independents.

Therefore, we ask you, President Obama, to:

- Initiate and support federal legislation to create open primaries for election to federal office in all 50 states that guarantees full access for independent voters;
- Establish a Presidential Task Force on Political and Electoral Reform that includes representatives of the broad movement of independent voters to consider sweeping nonpartisan reform of the electoral process and its administration;
- Use your bully pulpit to speak out on the importance of open primaries and the inclusion of independents in all aspects of the electoral and political process.

Date	Name	Address	Phone	Email

Signatures Collected by _____