



CHARTING A NEW COURSE

The Independent Center's 2025 Annual Report

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Independents,

What a year it's been, not just for the Independent Center, but for the independent movement as a whole! With 2025 winding down, I wanted to take a moment to express our sincere gratitude for your support, commitment, and endorsement of our mission: to build a home for the politically homeless.

Believe it or not, 2025 was our first full year of operation. And we strived to make the most of it. From local grassroots meetups, to media events, to focus groups and polling research, none of this would have been possible without you.

The American electorate is experiencing rapid change: the collapse of partisan loyalty (independents now make up 43% of the country's voters), to the political maturation of younger Millennials and Gen Z, to the integration of AI into our everyday lives, it's difficult to keep track of political news.

But all of these changes present the independent movement with a golden opportunity. And let me be clear: our opportunity would not be nearly as potent without the convergence of these three trends.

In plain English: the time for independent Americans has never been better.

American politics needs reinvigoration to its very core. Our governing framework, the US Constitution, remains strong. But the dynamics affecting our elections and candidates are undermining both institutions and norms.

This is where the independent movement comes into play. Independents have been excluded from the political conversation for far too long. But now they're a force to be reckoned with. Sanity and common sense in an era of insanity and absurdity.

On behalf of everyone at the Independent Center, thank you for your involvement in bringing the voices of independent and independent-minded Americans to elected officials and the press and educating the public about the importance of non-partisan political engagement.

Here's to 2026.

Best,

Lura Forcum, President

LETTER FROM THE STRATEGIC ADVISOR

Dear Independent Center Supporters and Allies,

American society is fundamentally changing. With the decline of the two parties, the political maturation of Millennials and Gen Z into the electorate, and the increasing integration of AI into everyday life, the old rules of politics are out.

2025 marks the first full year of activity for the Independent Center—an organization that is seeking to modernize an outdated and out-of-touch two party system that repeatedly fails on the issues that matter most.

The ever-churning news cycle in 2025 reinforced what our polling data, AI research, and qualitative assessment discovered: independents are prepared to fundamentally alter the course of American history.

In Washington, the only force powerful enough to instill fear into elected officials are their voters. And in this day and age, independent voters are the ones that send chills down Congressional spines. That's because they're the ones that ultimately decide elections. Partisan bases are important, yes. But the fulcrum of elections hinges on these swing voters.

Much of 2025 was focused on building a foundation to serve as a springboard for heightened activity in 2026. With a list of over 550,000 individuals, new partners and coalitions, and media traction, we're in a premier position to do this. Additionally, our cutting-edge AI models give us a comparative advantage on this front.

Republican and Democrat-aligned organizations might have more money and larger staffs, but the realignment trends are not in their favor.

What's more, the independent movement possesses a degree of scrappiness to it that established organizations lack. Call it the "underdog mentality," if you will. While both parties bask in collective complacency, independents are organizing and strategizing.

If election night in 2026 is the grand and majestic ball, independents are prepared to arrive with perfectly fitting glass slippers.

The energy and momentum that I'm witnessing at the IC and in this space is unlike anything I've experienced in my 20+ career in politics, primarily because it's new and full of potential. That's why I'm incredibly bullish about the potential to solve our nation's greatest challenges through this new movement. We have no other choice.

Independents are about to be noticed in 2026. There's no denying this. But the clock is approaching midnight.

Adam Brandon, Strategic Advisor



BUILDING OUR FOUNDATION

This year we established key infrastructure to scale and sustain the independent movement in 2026 and beyond.



501 (c)(3)

Build a strong, cohesive and sustainable independent movement through leadership in research, education, and advocacy.

We poll and interview independent-minded Americans so that their voices are heard by the press and elected officials.



501 (c)(4)

Advance the independent movement with capabilities, infrastructure and support across polling, data insights, voter data and candidate/district recruitment.

We deliver the capabilities and services needed to activate local independents and deliver results.



Hybrid PAC

Provide a vehicle for funding independent candidates and their campaigns with the ability to accept soft & hard dollar donations.

We keep candidates focused on their most important role, by advising, deploying funds and supporting campaign needs in a timely and fully compliant manner.

The Washington Post

NEW INDEPENDENT MOVEMENT WANTS TO DENY BOTH PARTIES A HOUSE MAJORITY

The Independent Center will back centrists that appeal to voters who dislike Democrats and Republicans. Winning just a few seats could break the two-party system.

May 10, 2025 | Column by Paul Kane

LIVONIA, Mich. — During focus-group sessions in this bellwether state, two groups of swing voters were asked last month to give an instant assessment of the two political parties.

The Democratic Party came under attack: "old, slow ... lost ... a joke ... rudderless." The image of today's Republican Party wasn't much better, viewed largely through President Donald Trump: "far right, no middle ... a joke, too ... united ... delusional."

Behind the screen that blocked her from the participants, Lura Forcum nodded with approval. As president of the Independent Center, Forcum is leading a bid to rally voters who dislike both major parties around alternative candidates who will appeal to the vast middle.

A former marketing executive, Forcum has joined up with several disaffected former Republican-leaning operatives to do intense research on voter attitudes. Their next step will be to recruit candidates willing to take long-shot bets at winning House seats and upending a political system that's been built around a two-party Congress since just after the Civil War.

The sessions, conducted over 90 minutes each in mid-April, showed these voters would like more options. They overwhelmingly voted for either Trump or Kamala Harris, but not

out of abiding respect toward either major party.

"You have two actors who've insulated themselves from competition, but what it's allowed them to do is stop responding to the market. So, of course, it's going to invite in a competitor," Forcum said in a follow-up call Thursday.

Her cohorts, Adam Brandon and Brett Loyd, are the top political strategists. Brandon served as president of FreedomWorks until last May, when he had to shutter the libertarian-aligned organization that lost relevance in the Trump era. Loyd, who once served on Trump's polling team, now runs a nonpartisan polling and data firm while overseeing the research and focus groups for the Independent Center.

Their objective is both relatively small and, in terms of impact, potentially massive.

Rather than trying to run a third-party presidential campaign that would require billions of dollars and untold resources to get ballot access in all 50 states, they hope to win up to a handful of House races with centrist candidates who will not accept support from either major party.

In this era of such narrow margins, that might deny Republicans and Democrats the 218 votes needed for the majority and create a protracted negotiation for a coalition

government.

"We're going to that new center. So I will say that people are scared of this being a spoiler. Yes, we're trying to wreck the system. We're trying to disrupt the entire duopoly," Brandon said during Thursday's video call.

For three straight elections, the House majority has not topped 222 seats. Currently, House Republicans hold just 220 seats. Picking off three to five seats might be enough to block either party from the minimum needed for the majority.

Brandon envisions a House with a small bloc of independents who can negotiate and determine which party gets the majority, based on the independents' demands. "We want a debt commission. We want to start studying this issue. We want to start backing this type of reform," he said.

The three understand the uphill nature of their task. Not since 1990, when Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vermont) won his first congressional race, has a new candidate won a House race as an independent. And for more than 140 years, either Democrats or Republicans emerged from elections with a clear House majority.

But Loyd noted that the House provides so many possible openings, unlike a presidential race or a massive Senate campaign.

"There's 435 seats in the House. We've got 435 chances," he said.

Their ripest targets would be the highly educated suburban districts that have swung back and forth over the past 15 years. But some solidly Republican or Democratic districts, with incumbents who haven't worked hard in an election in a long time, also offer opportunities.

The most competitive House races in a midterm election draw roughly 300,000 voters, with fewer than 250,000 casting ballots in noncompetitive races with seemingly entrenched incumbents. Those latter races also see as little as \$1 million in total spending.

Their pitch is either incredibly naive or ahead of the times, in terms of campaign finance laws and technology.

They only want their candidates to raise enough money to hire a few top aides. All other functions of the campaign will be handled through a super PAC (somehow no one else bought the rights to "Independent PAC" until now) that will fund voter mobilization and advertising. And they want their candidates to emerge as late as possible in terms of filing deadlines to get on ballots, a type of political sneak attack for which the traditional parties are not preparing.

The Independent Center doesn't have a single galvanizing issue. Ross Perot's Reform Party movement in the 1990s grew out of concerns about the national debt, while the Republican Party emerged in the 1850s with its antislavery agenda. They intend to rely heavily on AI to mine issue trends in districts to find the right issues to move independents.

This agenda is more focused on a broken political system.

With so much voter cynicism, Loyd imagines how one of his candidates could mock the other two major-party nominees in a general election debate. "Wouldn't it be great if the candidate could win without

raising millions and millions and billions of dollars from lobby groups and special interests? Wouldn't that be great?" Loyd proclaimed.

Exit polls showed a surge in voters calling themselves independent, growing from 26 percent in 2020 to 34 percent in 2024.

Ideologically, moderates are now the dominant force in politics: 42 percent of voters considered themselves moderate last year, compared with 35 percent identifying as conservative and 23 percent liberal.

Recent conventional wisdom has focused on the concept that most independents regularly vote with one major party or the other, with less than 10 percent of all voters truly being up for grabs in a close campaign.

Forcum doesn't buy that prospect.

With a PhD in consumer psychology and years in academia, Forcum believes both political parties have ignored the growing bloc of independents while devoting most of their budgets to negative ads that appeal to their most faithful supporters.

"We're leaving out all these people in the middle who dropped out of politics because it is unpleasant, absurd and inhumane," she said. "And if we're offering them a path to political engagement that's more pleasant than that, I think that we have a huge opportunity. I don't think it's nearly as crazy as it otherwise would sound."

A year ago, Brandon spoke at a political conference aligned with traditional Reagan-Bush conservatism. He told the crowd that they had lost to the MAGA movement, that it had fully taken over the Grand Old Party.

"It was literally like I killed a cat in the room," he said. "I came off the stage and not one person wanted to

talk to me."

Except Forcum, who walked up to him and found a kindred spirit. Loyd also had his own disillusionment with traditional politics.

In 2016, he was flying high with Kellyanne Conway's polling company, correctly predicting a Trump surge that propelled him to an upset victory. Three years later, when the reelection team's polling leaked, showing Trump headed for defeat to Joe Biden, he got fired.

"You're catering to the fundraising crowd. And it's truly childish," Loyd said of polling for traditional party candidates.

Their target audience is younger voters, particularly in the millennial and Gen Z groups. They have grown up in a culture where they can choose anything to watch or listen to, not constrained by what the main TV and radio stations are offering at that moment.

"If you're under 50, you get it," Brandon said, describing how his pitches to donors go.

In Livonia, about 20 miles west of downtown Detroit, Loyd questioned two groups of 10 voters, only two over age 50. While nine voted for Trump and five voted for Harris, the others either did not vote or voted for a third-party option.

Loyd asked them about next year's Senate race in Michigan. Only one said, right now, he would support the Republican. Two were undecided, and two said they would vote for the Democrat.

Five said, if the right candidate appeared, they wanted to vote for an independent. Now this new group needs to find candidates and prove independents can win.

"We have got to get it right once or twice, and that's all it's going to take," Brandon said. "Prove the point, and then it's going to be a groundswell."

THE IC GOES TO WASHINGTON

On July 23, 2025, the Independent Center hosted a pivotal event in Washington, D.C., spotlighting the fastest-growing political demographic in America: independents.

Representing 43% of the electorate, independents are no longer political outliers. They're the future of American politics.

The day featured candid conversations on breaking the two-party monopoly, restoring trust in institutions, and putting country before party. Key voices included:

- CHUCK TODD (NBC News)
- SENATOR JOE MANCHIN
- LINDSEY WILLIAMS-DRATH (President, Forward Party)
- Former Reps. MARK SANFORD, REID RIBBLE, KEN BUCK
- PAUL RIECKHOFF (Independent Veterans of America)

Their message was clear: this is not a moment—it's a movement. The Independent Center is driving the change needed to hold leaders accountable and ensure independents have a decisive voice in American politics.



Lura Forcum offering closing remarks about the independent movement



Adam Brandon talking about entitlement modernization with former Reps. Reid Ribble, Ken Buck, and Mark Sanford



Chuck Todd moderating a panel with Forward President Lindsey Drath Williams and Bullfinch CEO Brett Loyd



Adam Brandon addressing the crowd in Washington, D.C.



Independent Candidate Todd Achilles (ID) and Independent leader Khalil Ekulona

GRASSROOTS IN ACTION



Holden Lipscomb speaking to a group of high school students



Lura Forcum hosting a grassroots meetup of independent Americans in Raleigh, NC



Holden Lipscomb with members of the Independent Center community at local meetup in Tyler, TX



Adam Brandon speaking to students at Tufts University

RECLAIMING THE SPOILER NARRATIVE

One of the biggest dilemmas facing independents? Being labeled as "spoilers."

That's why we launched an online campaign to reclaim the spoiler title.

By proudly embracing the spoiler label, the Independent Center built momentum for a movement that disrupts toxic partisanship and forces accountability in Washington.

Reframed "spoiler" as a force for positive disruption.

Grew the Movement with new members, subscribers, and activists.

Elevated independent voices in redistricted communities.



Laid the groundwork for 2026 by showing independents decide elections.

INDEPENDENT MINDS BOOK CLUB

The Independent Minds Book club is one of our online community programs where independent-minded Americans gather quarterly to discuss relevant books and ideas.



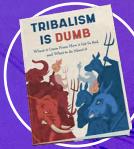
THE SOUL OF AMERICA
by Jon Meacham



WHY WE'RE POLARIZED
by Ezra Klein



BELONGING
by Geoffrey Cohen



TRIBALISM IS DUMB
by Andrew Heaton



The Independent Minds Book Club is such a refreshing change on how to approach politics in 2025. It was such a great way to explore new ideas and be challenged by people that come from diverse backgrounds. Today, politics is either communicated in red or blue terms. But the Independent Minds Book Club is a space to think freely as an individual.

- ZACH G. FROM FALLS CHURCH, VA



Both major parties have lost their way. There's no consideration from either side for collaboration or compromise to reach common sense solutions on issues. The environment in the U.S. is becoming more toxic and dystopian. There has to be a better way!

- JAMES, PROUD SPOILER



The two party system is broken. Neither party has passed a budget for thirty years. Everything has become political when it shouldn't be. It should be about solving problems.

- BARBARA, PROUD SPOILER



I only recently realized that I don't have to be forced to completely agree with one of the two major parties. I'm proud to be a spoiler because it is time to stop towing party lines and really vote for what matters!

- SHEILA, PROUD SPOILER

THE INDEPENDENT RESOURCE HUB

The Independent Center is the “go to” source of information for independents.

Through our partnership with the Bullfinch Group, we provide objective, nonpartisan polling and survey insights on independents, key issues, and other major areas.

In 2025, our polling was featured by:



2025

The Dallas Morning News

INDEPENDENT VOTERS CAN MAKE GERRYMANDERING IRRELEVANT

October 17, 2025

THE HILL

IS 'NO KINGS' A NEW TEA PARTY IN THE MAKING?

July 1, 2025



BE WARY OF EXECUTIVE ORDERS

January 24, 2025

RealClear Politics

IN SHUTDOWN BLAME GAME, INDEPENDENTS ARE THE REAL WINNERS

November 19, 2025

THE HILL

SKILLED IMMIGRANTS ARE PART OF AN 'ALL OF THE ABOVE' STRATEGY FOR GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

January 1, 2025

The DISPATCH

INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES ARE MORE THAN SPOILERS

September 19, 2025

2025 BY THE NUMBERS



550,000+
LIST MEMBERS



AN INDEPENDENT EFFORT SAYS AI IS THE SECRET TO TOPPLE 2-PARTY POWER IN CONGRESS

The Independent Center is using AI to identify congressional districts where independent candidates could win over the Democratic or Republican candidate. Its goal is to elect at least a handful of independents to disrupt the two-party system on Capitol Hill.

December 1, 2025 | By Barbara Sprunt

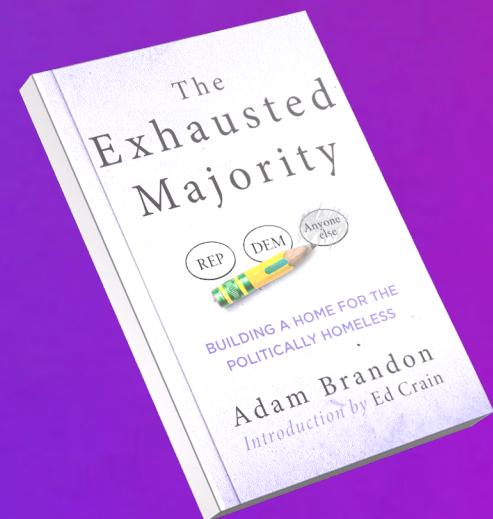
THANK YOU

Special thanks to all of our supporters and allies who have made this year possible. We look forward to continuing our momentum into 2026 and beyond.

“

“Revolutions are birthed in conversation, argument, validation, proximity, and the look in your listener’s eye that tells you you’re on to something”

- MALCOLM GLADWELL, THE BOMBER MAFIA



COMING IN 2026!

The Exhausted Majority
By Adam Brandon, Introduction by Ed Crane

Keep up with everything from the Independent Center

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www.independentcenter.org