

US Independent National Union

Exploratory Overview | 09/2020

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the thinking thus far about the possibility of an independent national union with the intent of receiving feedback, responses, concerns and engagement from a variety of experts and stakeholders able to potentially collaborate in running the first INU experiments in 2021 and 2022.

2.0 Context

Pervasive depression and chronic disease, mass incarceration, international violence, ecocide, homelessness and poverty, addiction and political disengagement are just the beginning of the evidence to point to that the two-party system in the US is failing to produce a thriving society. Not only is it seemingly missing the mark through incompetence, it seems as though it is also functioning through intentional design to support private interests in systematically extracting life and value from the commons of people and nature like a pernicious, parasitic tyrant, controlling and exploiting the world, through the United States government, for personal gain. The legal, media and cultural strategies the two-party system uses to defend its position are extremely powerful and have ensured its immovability for many decades.

A range of political actors independent from the two-party system have emerged as alternatives, working for decades to build political influence, however their electoral results are still negligible compared to the two-party system. Working in silos, against each other, these independent political networks have had limited financial resources, organizing power, press attention and voter support.

There is no other way to liberate the United States government from hegemonic control of the two-party system than for the fragmented independent networks to unite culturally and electorally, to create systems that enable the concentration of political power behind **one independent candidate per election seat**.

We are presented with an opportunity to replay the American myth of E Pluribus Unum. As the colonies came together to defeat our last tyrant, King George, we independent political actors in the US must now come together to defeat our modern, two-headed tyrant to restore the original promise of American—Life, Liberty and Happiness—and enable a new American era to emerge.

3.0 Solution

A union of independent networks and citizens would enable a new type of political organizing in the US—an internal nomination process to determine the best one independent candidate for any given seat and the alignment to organize concentrated support behind that one candidate to increase the chances of an election outcome. This is intended to systematically move power away from the two-party system by electing leaders independent from it and ready to accelerate critical systemic transformations in health, economics and within our democracy itself.

This paper is proposing the formation of an Independent National Union with the expressed purpose of conducting a primary nomination process for election seats nationwide outside of the two-party system. There are more registered independents than members of either major party and the US electorate has been waiting for confidence to have their ballot choice reflect their voter registration. We can create that confidence and engagement from the US electorate through unification. We will inspire our fellow Americans by showing our ability to set aside personal agendas for a collective benefit and come into coherence as diverse actors.

Beyond facilitating the local and national nomination processes, the INU will also effort to

- build relationships of trusts between independent networks,
- enact various strategies to build confidence and engagement in Independent politics from the US electorate,
- recruit, vett, train and empower optimal independent candidates,
- strategize races for maximum chance of an outcome,
- produce media and content that educates, inspires, activates and engages increased civic engagement from Americans

4.0 Paradigm

If our only ideological options were Left and Right, the idea of an independent national union is impossible because groups associated with far right or far left would always default to supporting the left or right leaning major party because of an inaccurate assessment of greater alignment with one of the major parties than their fellow independent networks.

Along with the vision of an independent union, we are also offering a vision of a new paradigm. The '**political Rise**,' is a new domain of political organizing that has a distinct set of ideological features from the Left and Right including principles such as:

- integration of diverse perspectives to produce better holistic understanding
- unification of diverse stakeholders with diverse interests to create something better for all than anyone could create for themselves on our own
- a devotion to affirming the dignity and the increasing quality of life for all
- listening, understanding, empathy, authenticity and good-faith dialogue integral to the political process
- self-imposed transparency, accountability and integrity
- deep inquiry, improved sense-making and ensuring healthy information ecologies
- personal cultivation, growth and embodiment of political ideals

This new domain, the political Rise, enables people to let go of their position on the ever-divisive Left-Right continuum and rise into a new domain of political organizing in which we can and must integrate our diverse perspectives to create something better together we could never create on our own.

All are invited into the political Rise, bringing everything that matters so much to us but leaving the inherent divisiveness, separation and systemic polarization that has become normalized from the sense that we've had to fight 'the other side' to get what we need. The political Rise is the ideological landscape we can find each other in that will enable an independent union to function and thrive.

5.0 Methodology

There are two aspects of the methodology this document seeks to portray. The first is how the INU organization could function and the second is how the independent nomination process could function.

5.1 Independent National Union Governance

5.1A Executive Committee

The INU Executive Committee is the central organizing body that manages day-to-day affairs of the INU. This Executive Committee also oversees the assembling of the INU Congress and INU Membership. The committee is responsible for revenue generation as well as the budget. The committee is overseen by co-directors, elected by the INU membership and overseen by the INU Congress. The remaining positions in the Executive Committee would be staff positions, hired/ appointed and overseen by the co-directors. Co-directors run together on one ticket in a general INU integrated election process every four years.

5.1B INU Congress

The INU Congress is the body of representatives that ensure various existing parties, networks, groups and communities are represented well in the INU sense-making and decision-making processes. Congress members will be invited by the Executive Committee based upon qualitative assessment of indicators including a) depth of commitment to independent politics, b) depth of influence within their respective groups, c) depth of interest in INU participation, d) depth of alignment and representation of diverse perspectives. INU Congress members are intended to expand the INU Membership network by inviting the individuals in their respective groups to register as INU Members. The INU Congress will inform which races to participate in, help engage stakeholders and groups in the INU nomination process and help direct maximum united campaign power behind the INU nominee for any given respective election race. The INU Congress will also hold the INU Executive Committee accountable to transparency, accountability, integrity and fulfilling their purpose in progressing the mission of the INU.

5.1C INU Membership

INU Membership is available to all US citizens. INU Members participate in the INU nomination processes and the INU Executive Committee elections. INU Members are intended to serve as a support base of the INU nominee in their general election. Members will have opportunities to contribute to the INU sense-making and intelligence through various input channels and are intended to help expand the INU Membership network.

5.2 Independent National Union Integrated Nomination Process

The intent of the INU Integrated Nomination Process is to support a collection of diverse independent candidates and networks to coalesce into one independent candidate with one independent campaign for any given election seat in which the INU Integrated Nomination Process is deployed. This includes an integration of quantitative and qualitative inputs from INU Members, as well as collective sense-making processes intended to help the best candidate become as universally self-evident as possible to maintain cohesion within the INU and to generate maximum engagement and support for that specific general election behind the INU Nominee.

5.2A - Determine Race

Accountable to the INU Congress's suggestions, the Executive Committee will determine which races to engage in based upon various factors including resources available, national political climate, local political climate, likelihood of an outcome, quality of candidates, etc. Once it is determined that an INU Integrated Nomination Process will be run for a given race, this will be announced to the INU Congress and INU Membership.

5.2B - Promote Engagement

Once a race is determined, an INU Race Committee will be established to oversee the INU Integrated Nomination Process as well as support the subsequent general election. The first role of the INU Race Committee will be to promote the INU Integrated Nomination within the jurisdiction of the seat to maximize engagement from existing networks, influencers, potential candidates, INU Members and the remainder of the electorate.

5.2C - Candidate Registration

All candidates interested in participating in the INU Integrated Nomination Process with the potential of being the INU Nominee must complete a registration form prior to a given deadline providing information around background, intent, existing campaign resources, commitment to good-faith participation, commitment to integrous government stewardship and a commitment to support whoever the INU Nominee is to create an electoral outcome. All candidate registrations will be reviewed by the INU Race Committee and qualifying candidates will be invited into the INU Integrated Nomination Process.

5.2D - Baseline Nomination Round

The INU Members relative to a race in which an INU nomination process is conducted, will cast their initial standard vote for one candidate and indicate through checkboxes their justification for selecting this nominee. The intent of this first round is to reveal the existing support any given nominee has and the meaning voters ascribe to their support.

5.2E - Proposal-Generating Nomination Round

After hearing from candidates and being informed of the existing support and justifications behind that support from the Baseline Nomination Round, voters will now have a better understanding of the candidate options, their alignment with, and the electability of, various candidates enabling voters to make a more informed vote. This second round of voting is a Rank-Choice-Vote style vote, plus justification data via checkboxes, intended to reveal, from an educated and empowered electorate, the best candidate with the most support.

5.2F - Proposal & Conversation Round

Subsequent to the Proposal-Generating Nomination round, The INU Race Committee will propose the INU Nominee. Through various digital and physical mediums created by the Race Committee, INU Members will have the ability to ask clarifying questions about the proposal and proposed candidate, and make reactions or objections to the proposal.

5.2G - Modify or Restate Proposal

Integrating the collective sense-making of the Proposal & Conversation Round, the Race Committee will either modify their proposal if influenced to do so or restate their existing one with further justification. If modified, another Proposal & Conversation Round will ensue. If restated, then that candidate will become the INU Nominee.

5.2G - INU Integrated Campaign for INU Nominee

All INU Members, INU Congress Members and INU Candidates who participated in the Integrated Nomination Process are invited, encouraged and expected to participate in an integrated campaign working diligently to produce an electoral outcome with the INU Nominee.

6.0 Rollout

The INU need not be declared into existence nor demand enrollment, alignment or compliance. If the ideas behind the INU have merit, then that merit will become self evident through experimentation. The INU can naturally grow into its potential, as a national political union shaping all US elections, from the seed and sprout of early experimentation generating lessons learned, successes experienced, credibility gained, exposure expanded, legitimacy increased and relationships cultivated.

6.1A 2021 Mayoral Race Experiments

In 2021 we intend to run our first experiments through several Mayoral races. In these experiments we intend to learn about each of our 8 proposed steps in our nomination process so we can refine the process to improve efficacy and prepare it to function more reliably, in a more automated fashion, supported by technology, and at larger scales.

6.1B 2022 National / State Race Experiments

If we are ready to run larger experiments in 2022, we can select several legislative or gubernatorial races to practice the INU Integrated Nomination Process at larger scales. This will produce new learnings and insights that improve our effectiveness to work at those scales as well as prepare to operate at larger scales.

6.1C 2023 Additional Practice & Preparation

In 2023 we can identify the key areas of learning we still seek and the US politics we intend to directly influence, and use that assessment to inform the activities of the INU and the number, types and location of races we choose to participate in that year.

6.1D 2024 INC Presidential Nominee

Depending on the results of our experiments, the scale of our influence, the depth of trust in our relationships, the size of our organization and the resources we have access to, the INC may run an Integrated Nomination Process for independent candidates for President. If successful, we stand the potential of uniting the entire Independent sector of Americans behind a single Independent Candidate and liberate the US Executive Branch from two-party control, enabling a new era in America to emerge.

7.0 Interim Executive Committee Stewardship

This INU research and experimentation phase is being catalyzed by a founding team who will steward the Executive Committee until the first INU Executive Committee election in 2023.

8.0 Driving Questions

The purpose of this section is to provide a non-comprehensive list of additional considerations that are being carefully inquired and approached by the INU founding team.

- **Unity**
 - How can we create a binding force within an INU nomination process that will create ease in candidate selection and enthusiastic support and coherence amongst the nomination candidates, and the respective networks they represent, to back one campaign that results in an election outcome?
 - What are going to be the biggest hurdles creating alignment among people with diverse political interests?
 - What explicit or implicit power dynamics could negatively impact our vision of unity and how can those dynamics be addressed in a way that leaves everyone feeling respected and empowered?
 - How might unconscious personal fears, traumas and prejudices undermine unity?
 - What are the principles and behaviours a member or candidate agrees to upon joining the INU?
 - What are all the expected or unexpected sources of resistance to the formation of the INU and the running of our Integrated Nomination Process?
 - What narratives and modes of storytelling will generate maximum positive engagement?
- **Membership**
 - What cultural norms, orientation and skills are required for members to effectively participate in the INU nomination processes?
- **Candidates**
 - What are all the dimensions of value candidates and networks can receive by participation in the INU and our nomination process?
 - What are the characteristics and attributes of candidates most important at this time and how can we best identify candidates who already embody them and/or uplevel existing candidates through education and training?
- **Campaigns**
 - What are the best ways to involve as many of the independent candidates as possible in any given race into the INU Integrated Nomination Process?
 - What are the best ways to effectively engage as much of the electorate as possible in our initial nomination process experiments?
 - How can we generate the best unified campaign and Independent voter turnout for the INU Nominee?
 - What mistakes might limit, reduce or decrease engagement?
- **Technology**
 - What technology solutions are most relevant for the early INU experiments?
- **Appreciative Inquiry**
 - What modern or historical, successful or failed attempts, to achieve something similar can we learn from?
- **Strategic Inquiry**
 - What are the most efficient, highest-leverage actions the founding team can take to generate the support and experiences necessary to increase the probability of actualizing the INU from concept to reality?

9.0 Your Role

You are invited to play a role in the exploration and formation of an Independent National Union.

8.1A Keep Organizing

The emergence of the INU ideas and experimentation take nothing away from existing independent organizing, in fact, it further justifies it. In order for the INU to be successful, it needs to interface with existing political networks with coherent values, interest, candidates and leadership. Keep consolidating, organizing, empowering and building trust with the groups and communities you naturally find yourself within and leading.

8.1B Provide Feedback

Please provide feedback on this exploratory overview. What opportunities do you know about that you can share with the INU founding / research team? What concerns do you have? What fail scenarios can you predict? What nuances, distinctions and insights can you offer to increase the probability of success? Do you endorse these notions and the proposed trajectory of experiments?

8.1C Participate in the Independent National Convention (INC)

Oct 23-25, 2020, in Wyoming, we will be holding an inaugural Independent National Convention to present the idea of the INU to leaders of the US Independent sector, make initial INU Congress invitations, gain feedback, integrate this potential together and explore interest, support and engagement with the upcoming experiments. Join in person or virtually. [Learn more](#).

8.1D Get Involved & Support

Consider getting involved to play a role with the formation of the INU, suggesting yourself as a INU Congress Member, offering funding or other material support, or stepping forward to play a role in one of our proposed 2021 experiments.