

American Resurrection——Today, I Declared Myself an Independent Candidate for President  
<https://robertfkennedyjr.substack.com/p/kennedy-independent-presidential-candidate>

Today, I declared myself an independent candidate for President of the United States of America.

And more than that, I joined my voice with all the people who are fed up and all the people who are hopeful, to make a new Declaration of Independence for our entire nation.

Today, I declared my independence from the corporations that have hijacked our government to milk us for profit.

I declared independence from Wall Street, Big Tech, Big Pharma, Big Ag, the military contractors, and their lobbyists who now outnumber members of Congress 20 to 1.

I declared independence from the mercenary media that forever urges us to hate our neighbors and fear our friends.

I declared independence from the cynical elites who betray our hope and amplify our divisions.

And finally, I declared independence from the two political parties and the corrupt interests that dominate them, and the entire rigged system of rancor and rage, corruption and lies, that has turned government officials into indentured servants of their corporate bosses. If left unchecked, they will commoditize our air, water, food, labor, and children, and turn the American Dream into desperation and dust.

I declared my independence from these corrupting powers because they are incompatible with the inalienable rights that our original Declaration of Independence invoked in 1776: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

How can we guard life when for-profit corporations have captured the public agencies that are supposed to protect us? How can we enjoy liberty when a surveillance state seeks to hide the truth and quash dissent to preserve its power? And how can we pursue happiness when our nation's families are imprisoned by debt and hunger and jobs that will never pay the bills?

And so today I declared my independence from the tyranny of corruption which robs us of affordable lives, belief in our future, and respect for one another. And to do that, I had to declare my independence from the Democratic Party and independence from all parties.

Read my entire speech below (as prepared):

Thank you, Lewis GrassRope, for that beautiful blessing. Lewis is a tribal elder from the Lower Brule Sioux, the grandson of a signer of the 1876 Fort Laramie treaty.

My father visited South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation in May of 1968 and spent the entire day there. A local political operative cautioned him that they mustn't keep the crowd of 20,000 waiting in Rapid City, commenting that "Indians don't vote." My father told him sharply, "You don't understand your candidate." When he saw a Sioux family living in the burned-out heap of an automobile, he wept. Word of his tears swept across the reservation and on June 5, Sioux voters turned out in historic numbers and made my father victorious in South Dakota.

On my many trips to Pine Ridge over the decades, the elders always take great pride in recounting that almost 100% of the Sioux vote went to RFK. Only three votes in Pine Ridge were tallied against him. They always end the story by saying, "We are still looking for those guys."

It is a hopeful sign that we now celebrate Indigenous People's Day. It shows that we are ready as a nation to tell untold histories and to finally include the dispossessed people who have long languished on the margins.

Today, as corrupt powers have overtaken our government, the ranks of the dispossessed have swelled beyond indigenous and Black people to include tens of millions of Americans who live paycheck to paycheck in financial desperation. The dispossessed also include the legions of the chronically ill, the addicted, the depressed, and the 80% of the country that can no longer afford a normal middle-class lifestyle.

A rising tide of discontent is swamping our country. There is danger in this discontent, yet there is also promise. The danger is that demagogues will hijack it toward fascism. Or, that our rulers will divert it onto an external enemy to start yet another war.

But the biggest danger, which we've seen unfold in real-time, is that we will direct our discontent at each other. As Abraham Lincoln observed, quoting Jesus Christ, "A house divided against itself, cannot stand." A polarized nation is easy for corrupt powers to manipulate and strip of its wealth, its freedoms, and its dignity.

Those are the dangers, so, what is the promise? The promise is of reunion. We are told that our nation is hopelessly divided. But I've found it less divided than it seems.

The most hateful voices are usually the loudest. But quietly, Americans are looking with disgust at the vitriol, the name-calling, and the venom. They want it to end. They want us to get along. The loud, hateful controversies obscure vast areas of agreement.

Most of us agree that we should take care of our veterans at home and seek peace abroad. We agree that teachers deserve decent salaries, and that housing should be affordable, and that corporations should pay their fair share.

We agree that we want a clean environment and wholesome communities for our kids.

Yet these universal yearnings stand alongside a broad agreement that our nation has lost its way. Americans are weary of the culture war, the phony slogans of politicians, and the partisan blame game that has us all at each other's throats. And people suspect that the divisions are deliberately orchestrated, and that getting us to hate each other is part of the scam. And they're fed up with being fooled, and they are ready to take back their power.

There is no other explanation for the enthusiasm I see every day in the people flocking to our campaign. Sometimes it gives me goosebumps. Their minds may tell them the situation is hopeless, that the elites are too entrenched, that the corruption is too deep. But their hearts say otherwise. I know that because I meet scores of people every day, even those in the hardest circumstances, who haven't given up on America.

I've walked the picket lines in Los Angeles with hotel workers who live in their cars because they can't afford rent. I've visited mobile health clinics on the back roads of Georgia, where families get their medical care from traveling nurses in the back of a bus. I've planted gardens in the food deserts of Watts and Cleveland. I've sat amongst migrant children at the border, and I've met social workers and doctors in Yuma who treat these immigrants with kindness and heartbreaking generosity.

I've walked the fields with farmers in Kansas who can't drink from their own pesticide-poisoned wells. I've sat at kitchen tables in Pennsylvania with parents working every hour God gives them to afford a home of their own, only to get outbid by hedge funds making cash offers.

I've worked out with veterans who served in foreign wars with honor, only to come home to a country bankrupted by those wars. I've eaten with small business owners who had to board up their dreams as Amazon cashed in. I've talked with moms from Nevada to New Hampshire, who lie awake at night juggling unpayable bills, choosing between gasoline and groceries. I've met senior citizens who cut their pills in two to stretch out their prescriptions.

I've pulled dead fish from rivers clogged with chemical run-off and I've read stories to children devastated by chronic disease.

It can look pretty dark, all these people cycling from despair to rage and back to despair again. This country sits atop a bubbling cauldron of fury. Americans are angry at being left out, left behind, swindled, cheated, and belittled by a smug elite that has rigged the system in its favor.

But I've also seen hope. I've traveled millions of American miles in my career. And, to quote Tennyson, "I am a part of all whom I have met." For 40 years Americans across the country have fortified me with their courage and idealism. But this year, I have witnessed an upwelling of optimism such as I have never seen in my lifetime.

Optimism is not the same as denial. We have to acknowledge the truth. We face a decaying infrastructure, and record levels of addiction, depression, and chronic disease. We face entrenched political corruption and an inequality of wealth not seen in a hundred years.

But the good news is that finally, people are fed up. Something is stirring that says, “It doesn’t have to be this way.” People stop me everywhere I go, at airports and hotels and on the street, and remind me that this country is ready for a history-making change. They are ready to reclaim their freedom and independence.

And that is why I am here today. I am here to declare myself as an independent candidate for President of the United States. And that’s not all. I am here to join all of you to make a new Declaration of Independence for our entire nation.

We declare independence from the corporations that have hijacked our government. We declare independence from Wall Street, Big Tech, Big Pharma, Big Ag, the military contractors, and their lobbyists.

We declare independence from the mercenary media that fortifies corporate orthodoxies, and urges us to hate our neighbors and fear our friends.

We declare independence from the cynical elites who betray our hope and amplify our divisions.

And finally, we declare independence from the two political parties and the corrupt interests that dominate them, and the entire rigged system of rancor and rage, corruption and lies, that has turned government officials into indentured servants of their corporate bosses.

We declare our independence from these corrupting powers because they are incompatible with the inalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness that our original Declaration of Independence invoked in 1776.

How can we guard life when for-profit corporations have captured the public agencies that are supposed to protect us? How can we enjoy liberty when a surveillance state seeks to hide the truth and quash dissent? And how can we pursue happiness when debt and low wages imprison so many of our nation’s families?

And so I have come here to declare our independence from the tyranny of corruption which robs us of affordable lives, belief in our future, and respect for each other. But to do that, I must first declare my own independence. Independence from the Democratic Party and independence from all parties.

I haven’t made this decision lightly. It is painful for me to let go of the party of my uncles, my father, of my grandfather and of both of my great-grandfathers — John “Honey Fitz” Fitzgerald, Boston’s first Irish Catholic mayor, and Patrick Kennedy, a Boston ward boss, who together, launched my family’s political dynasty more than a century ago. But MY sacrifice is nothing compared to the risk our founding fathers took when they signed the

Declaration of Independence 247 years ago right over there. THEY knew that if their revolution failed, every last one of them would be hanged. They chose to place everything on the line.

When John Adams put his pen down after adding his signature to the Declaration, he turned to those present and said, “Sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, from this day on, I’m with my country.” I make that same pledge today, so that I may stand before you as every leader should — free of partisan allegiance and backroom deals — a servant only to my conscience, to my creator, and to you. Today, we are turning a new page in American politics.

There HAVE been independent candidates before. But this time is different. This time, the Independent is going to win. Three-fourths of Americans believe President Biden is too old to govern effectively. President Trump faces multiple civil and criminal trials. Both have favorability ratings deep in negative territory. That is what two-party politics has given us And that is why we need to pry loose the hammerlock of corrupt power over Washington D.C. and make this nation ours again.

But there is a sacrifice that everyone, including myself, has to make if we are to unite America. We will have to surrender a kind of political addiction that is at the root of our divisions. It is the addiction to taking sides. Our nation’s renewal begins with listening to each other again — with respect. Only then will we be able to step outside our tired, stuck debates.

We will ask the questions no one thought to ask. We will discover solutions that were right in front of our face. We will listen, not just to the other side, but to those apart from any side. In a two-sided conflict, both parties have a kind of mutual dependency. Each depends on the other to define themselves as the good guys, in contrast to the other side, who are, of course, the bad guys. Well, if you are Team Good, then you’ll do anything, however unscrupulous, to defeat Team Evil. And that’s why we have seen both parties sacrifice their own values — and the canons of democracy — in an all-out battle for power.

In the war against Evil, any means justifies the end. The result is that you become evil yourself. The child obsessed with hating a parent becomes that parent. As I’ve surrendered my attachment to taking sides, I’ve been able to listen with new ears to people with whom I disagree, and see solutions that would otherwise have been invisible.

I’ll give you an example. Six months ago, I thought that an open border was a humanitarian policy, and that sealing the border meant you were a xenophobe or perhaps even a racist. I was wrong.

How did I learn I was wrong?

It wasn’t just that I listened to the other side. It was when I actually visited the border and listened to the people who weren’t on either side. My views changed as I spoke to border patrol officers, to local officials, to aid workers,

and to the migrants themselves. I saw that no one party has a monopoly on wisdom, and no simplistic narrative contains the whole truth.

My promise to you as President is that on every issue, I will listen to stakeholders from every side and beyond any side. I will uphold MY moral convictions absolutely, but I will also hold my opinions lightly. I will look at the evidence and the arguments, and choose not the easy path, not the established path, but the right path.

In making an independent run for President, I take inspiration from the one other President who was not a member of a political party. That President was George Washington. In his farewell address, Washington issued a prescient warning about the disastrous potential of party politics. Inevitably, he said, political parties will be taken over by a “cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled” minority who will serve the interests of the party rather than the interests of the nation and “usurp for themselves the reins of government.” Washington’s dire prediction has certainly come true.

I intend to wrest the reins from both parties and return them to the American people.

For years, pundits have been asking, “How do we get young people to engage in politics?” These experts are asking the wrong question. The problem isn’t the young people. The problem is what my generation has allowed politics to become.

The millennials and Gen Z are repelled by the toxicity, the pettiness, and, more than any of that, by the dishonesty. They crave authenticity. So no, the problem isn’t the young people. The problem is the politics. I am committed to inaugurating a politics worthy of their engagement.

I want to share with you a hopeful sign. I am proud to say, my supporters include pro-lifers and pro-choicers. They include climate activists and climate skeptics. They include the vaccinated and the unvaccinated. They include people on both sides of our culture war.

Why? Because more and more Americans are beginning to understand, that for the good of the country, one cannot insist on getting one’s way on every issue. They understand that people can disagree and still respect each other. You can be pro-choice, and not think that pro-lifers are woman-hating zealots. You can support the Second Amendment, and not think gun control advocates are totalitarians who hate freedom.

This is what I mean by independence. It’s more than being independent of the two existing parties. It is also independence from tribal thinking. It is freedom from the reflex of taking sides. Instead of “Which side are you on?” I’m going to ask, What do you care about? What do your children need? What is it like to be you? Because, our country is never going to heal if the formula is for one-half of the population to beat the other in pitched battle.

I am happy to say, the old political alignments are dissolving. Right and left have become all mixed up anyhow. It used to be the DEMOCRATIC Party

that opposed censorship. It was the Democratic Party that wanted to rein in the military and the CIA. It was the Democratic Party that fought corporate influence.

Remember when Wall Street and the big corporations all supported the Republicans? Who is liberal now, and who is conservative? Who is left and who is right? These labels make less and less sense. Yet out of habit, we group ourselves around the empty husks of old alignments and threadbare ideologies.

But now that habit is breaking down. That's why half of the electorate no longer identifies with any political party, and 63% of Americans want an independent to run for President. The outer structures of the parties still dominate the political landscape, but they've hollowed out from within like a building ridden with termites. What kind of new political structures might emerge from their ruins? What will politics look like when it's no longer us-versus-them?

American democracy should be more than just picking between two candidates anointed by shadowy institutions. Big Oil funds the Republicans. Big Tech funds the Democrats. Big Pharma and the military contractors make sure to donate to both. Instead of two parties, we have a uniparty, a monster with two faces loudly bickering with itself as it lumbers over a cliff. At the bottom of that cliff lies the destruction of our country.

Neither party has offered meaningful resistance to the endless wars that have sucked dry our wealth. Neither has done anything to reverse the erosion of the middle class. Both are powerless to rein in our exploding deficits. They have contributed equally to the corporate giveaways, the corruption in Washington, and the surveillance state. Yes, there are good and honest people within both parties, even among their leadership. But the system itself is hopelessly corrupt.

Now let me tell you what an independent Presidency will look like.

Because I am independent of the military contractors, I will be able to pursue a foreign policy of peace and diplomacy.

Because I am independent of wealthy donors, I will be able to close the loopholes and giveaways that bloat our budget.

Because I am independent of Wall Street, I will be able to rescue debtors instead of banks.

Because I am independent of the big polluters, I will be able to clean up our soil, air, and water.

Because I am independent of the corporations, I'll be able to unravel the capture of our federal agencies.

And because I am independent of the two political parties, I will be able to enact bold policies that are outside the partisan conversation.

Let me be clear though, being independent of the two political parties is not to be their enemy. Dogmatic opposition is just as much a form of dependency as dogmatic loyalty. As President, I will work with officials from both parties who join with me in serving the nation rather than their narrow partisan advantage.

Every President enters office talking about uniting the nation and working with people from the other party. None of them ever does. They can't. They are already on a side. Well, I'm not going to have that problem. I'm going to build coalitions from both sides of the aisle. What that means is that members of Congress will start working together across party lines in ways we've barely seen for a generation. I promise you, it is going to be hard to tell whether our administration is right or left.

Is it right or left to support small farms? Is it right or left to pull back from the brink of hot war with Russia? Is it right or left to implement a tamper-proof election system that also guarantees that no one is denied a vote? Locked in their habitual debates, the two parties are often blind to commonsense solutions. This formula has left them barely able to govern. Practically every year, we verge on default or government shutdown. And that's just the most obvious example of the paralysis of our two-party system.

The system runs on inertia, year after year, decade after decade. It's like a runaway bus full of teenagers fighting about who should take the wheel, not realizing that the driver merely follows the GPS set by the crooked insiders and corporate lobbyists.

I'm not just going to take the wheel. I'm going to reboot the GPS. And do you know who is going to set the destination? You are. Because as I have traveled this great nation, I have listened to your hopes for its future. Together we will set the GPS toward the promise of America that Jonathan Winthrop foresaw from the deck of the ship Arbella in 1630.

He predicted that we would become an exemplary nation, a city on a hill, a lamp to all the other nations of the world. We came close to fulfilling that vision post World War II, and it lives on today as an ideal. It is an America with a prosperous middle class, where if you work hard, you can afford a house, take a summer vacation, and put something aside for retirement.

It is an America with an education system that is the envy of the world.

It is an America that treasures and preserves its stunning natural beauty.

It is an America with incorruptible regulatory agencies and dedicated public servants.

It is a bastion of the rights enshrined in its Constitution. And it is a champion of peace and freedom that the whole world looks to for moral leadership. That is the America that is possible when we declare independence from the deadlocked party establishment. That's the America that is possible when we declare independence from the war machine that devours a trillion dollars a year. That's the America that's possible when we



stop fighting each other. And that's the vision of America I will serve when I become President of the United States.

The media pundits will tell you we have no chance. They say my only impact will be to draw votes from other candidates.

The Democrats are terrified I'll spoil the election for President Biden. The Republicans fear I'll spoil it for President Trump. The truth is — they're both right!

But only their inside-the-beltway myopia deludes them into thinking we have no chance to win. I've seen the polls that they won't show you. I've sat at the kitchen tables they don't bother to visit. I've shaken hands with tens of thousands of Americans over the past six months. And I can tell you, our campaign has ignited a movement that has been smoldering for years, a movement to reclaim democracy and resurrect the promise of our republic. That's the real reason the party elites and the Washington insiders are terrified of my candidacy. They recognize an authentic challenge to their power when they see one.

There have been anti-establishment candidates before, but none who understand how to get that job done. Unlike President Trump, I've been fighting corporate corruption and suing government agencies for 40 years. I know how they work and I know how to clean them up. And unlike any President since 1963, I will stand up to the military-industrial complex. I will cash in the peace dividend, and bring our troops home with honor. I will rebuild America's strength from the inside out.

What really terrifies the elites, though, is not me. It is what I represent—a populist movement that defies the left-right division. I am merely the bowsprit of a ship that will cut through the armadas of corruption, secrecy, and lies. Except for the small minority of public officials who are actually corrupt, I am no enemy to the people in the two-party establishment, because guess what? They don't believe in it anymore either. They don't believe their own posturing. They don't believe their own rhetoric.

That's why so many public figures, Democrats and Republicans alike, have told me confidentially, "I can't support you publicly, but I really hope you win." They, too, want liberation from the system that has captured them. Isn't that what we all want? Liberation from the system that robs us of our wealth, our health, our hope, our patriotism, our ideals, and our sense of ourselves as a good and capable people.

Is that kind of freedom possible? Is the healing of our divided nation possible? If we wait for someone else to liberate us and unite us, then no, it is not possible. It becomes possible only when we believe it and take action. People ask me, "Yes, but can you win?" I want to turn the question back to you. Will our movement win? Will our movement to restore democracy, health, prosperity, freedom, and peace win?

I'm not asking you to make a prediction. I asking you to make a choice. It will happen if and when we the people choose it. Democracy does not come as a gift when oppressive authorities finally relent. Democracy comes when the people choose to exercise their power. And so I ask you today to join me in exercising the sovereign choice of a democratic people. Are we ready to win?

That is what the new Declaration of Independence sounds like. Remember this moment. We've got a year and a month till the election. Let's go take our country back.

God bless you and God bless our soon-to-be Re-United States of America.