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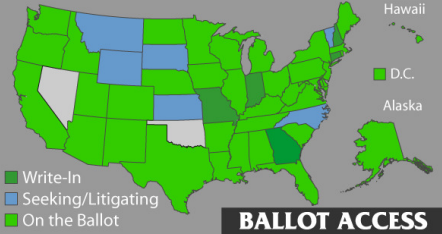

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Acceptance speech of Jill Stein at the Green National Convention

POSTED BY [JILL STEIN FOR PRESIDENT](#) 1273.80PC ON SEPTEMBER 10, 2012 · FLAG

Following is the full text of Jill Stein's speech accepting the 2012 presidential nomination of the Green Party of the United States. The speech was delivered in Baltimore, Maryland, on July 14th, 2012, before a national TV audience.



Something wonderful is happening in America. I've seen it as I've traveled across the nation this past year. In the face of severe hard times, oppression, and intimidation, people are standing up and speaking out. We are occupying our city squares, our imperiled schools, workplaces, and threatened homes. And now, with this election, we are going to occupy the voting booth in November.

The need could not be more urgent. We are at the breaking point – for people, the planet, our economy, and our democracy. The heat is rising. The ranks of the poor are swelling. Our young people are drowning in debt. There aren't enough jobs and wages are shrinking. And the rich keep getting richer while the rest of America gets poorer, year after year.

An entire generation has grown to adulthood knowing nothing but social decline. The two establishment parties have taken turns leading the way. First Bush. Then Clinton. Then Bush. Now Obama.

While the party labels change, the policies largely stay the same. In fact, in most key issues, Obama embraced the policies of Bush, and often went even further – with more massive bailouts for Wall Street, more free trade agreements sending jobs overseas and depressing wages at home, more threats to Medicare and Social Security, more skyrocketing foreclosures and student debt, more attacks on our imperiled civil liberties, immigrant rights, and medical marijuana, more plundering of the environment, wrecking of the climate, and endless, illegal wars. Have we had enough?

Yes, we've had enough. That's why people like you and me are standing up in a way the world hasn't seen in generations. We are a movement that's alive and well across America, and we are here to stay. Let me tell you why i'm standing up and how i come to be standing here today before you.

Thirty years ago, I was a new doctor starting off in medical practice. It was easy to see, even then, that our broken health care system was failing the people who desperately need it. As a mother, I was deeply troubled by the new epidemics descending on our children – the rising tide of obesity, diabetes, asthma, cancer, learning disabilities, autism and more. There were new.

I became impatient with dispensing pills and sending people back to the very things that are making us sick to start with – everything from pollution to poverty, to industrial nutrition, racism and violence. I thought if only our elected officials knew

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about all the amazing solutions that save lives, save money, and create jobs – and also save the environment. Surely they would want to do something – like supporting healthy sustainable food and clean energy instead of pouring our tax dollars into toxic industrial agriculture and poisonous fossil fuels.

Slowly I realized that to persuade elected officials, what you need is not cost-saving, life-saving, job-creating solutions, but rather giant bundles of big campaign checks. That was my wake up call that if we want to protect children's health, or want anything for that matter – the health care we need, or the education or the jobs – we need to first fix the broken political system.

So then I went to work to fix it, and joined a broad coalition to get big money out of politics in Massachusetts. We won. We passed a referendum for public financing of political campaigns by a huge 2:1 margin. But our state legislature – which was 85% Democrats – repealed the new law soon after it was passed, on an unrecorded voice vote no less so they couldn't be held accountable for defying the will of the voters.

And that was my real wake up call that if we want to change the broken political system, we need not just a new law, or a new lobbying effort, or a fresh face in the same old corrupt system.....We need a new, unbought political party that can put people of integrity in office – public servants who listen to the people not the corporate lobbyists that funnel checks into campaign war chests. That's what brought me to the Green Party – the only national party that is not bought and paid for by corporate money.

And here's why my resolve has only grown stronger over the years. As a mother – and a doctor – the concerns that activated me thirty years ago have only intensified. I – like you – see that our young people are still struggling....in every aspect of life – struggling for good health, for decent schools and to stay safe on the streets, struggling to afford a college education, to get a job, get out of debt, and struggling to have a climate they can actually live in for the future.

And they're losing the battle on every front.

People ask me why I keep fighting political battles in a rigged system. The answer is simple. I keep fighting because when it comes to our children, mothers don't give up. Neither do fathers, or sisters, brothers, sons and daughters. Young people today haven't given up – and they're the ones really carrying the burden of this rigged system. If they're not giving up, we're not giving up.

We're not only not giving up. We're doubling down and rising up. We are a movement for democracy and justice that's alive and well across the country – in eviction blockades, and Bank of America protests, in student strikes to stop tuition hikes; in protests against Stop and Frisk, Shoot First and SB1070, in mass arrests at nuclear power plants, and civil disobedience to stop fracking and stop mountain top removal and stop the Keystone Pipeline that marks game over for the climate.

As Alice Walker says, the biggest way people give up power is by not knowing they have it in the first place. Well we know we've got it, and we're gonna use it. And one of the ways we're going to use it is by having a voice in this election, and a choice at the polls that is not bought and paid for by Wall Street.

Because voting for either Wall Street candidate – Romney or Obama – just gives a mandate for four more years of corporate rule. Every vote they receive is an endorsement of the deadly trajectory we're on for the American people and the planet. It's time to change that plunge into catastrophe. That change starts with voting for real change. Every vote we receive is a vote for democracy for the 99% and survival for the planet.

To achieve that future, as president, I will work to deliver a Green New Deal for

America – a package of emergency reforms that puts 25 million people back to work and jump starts the Green economy. That Green economy will put a halt to climate change and make wars for oil obsolete. It reforms not only our economy, but our financial system and democracy as well. And it's not just an academic idea. It's based on a program that actually worked -- the New Deal that got us out of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The economic reforms of the Green New Deal will create living-wage, community-based jobs. And communities decide what jobs they need to become sustainable ecologically, economically and socially. That means for starters, jobs in the green areas of the economy -- in clean manufacturing, local organic agriculture, public transportation, and clean renewable energy.

I want to tell you about a young man whose life was transformed by this kind of job. His name is Ricardo and I met him in Holyoke, Massachusetts, touring some of the green small businesses thriving there. Ricardo had dropped out of school after being held back three times in 9th grade. Like most kids in poverty, his classes were too big, underfunded, and dominated by the usual test prep. But he found a training program in energy efficiency and solar hot water installation offered by a remarkable green energy cooperative called Coop Power in Western Mass. Ricardo was then hired by a small green energy business where he became crew leader within one year. And while doing all that, this high school dropout held back 3 times in 9th grade entered a GED program and graduated even before his own high school class received their diplomas. At age 20, he's been leading his crew now for 3 years, supporting his family and young child. This is a triple win. Ricardo pulls his life together. The community gets lower energy costs and cleaner air. And the climate gets a little more stable for us all. Under the Green New Deal, these win-win jobs will be the rule not the exception. And they're coming to your community.

The Green New Deal not only creates jobs like Ricardo's that make us ecologically sustainable. It also creates jobs that meet our social needs – teachers, nurses, childcare, after school, home care, violence and drug abuse prevention and rehabilitation. These jobs will be nationally funded, and locally and democratically controlled. They are community-based small businesses, worker owned cooperatives, and public works and services.

So to be clear: The Green New Deal will end unemployment in America. Of course, such a thing would never occur to Washington politicians because their corporate backers depend on the threat of unemployment to keep wages down. But ending unemployment, and more, is front and center for Americans who need jobs, so it's front and center on the Green agenda.

As Greens we are committed not only to jobs, but also to improving the social conditions for everyone in America . That's why the Green New Deal will create an immediate moratorium on home foreclosures and evictions. And that's why it guarantees health care for everyone as a human right through Medicare for All. This not only provides quality, comprehensive healthcare for everyone, it will restore your choice of provider and put you back in control of your own health care decisions – instead of having a profiteering insurance CEO make those decisions for you. And, it will save trillions by streamlining the massive, wasteful, health insurance bureaucracy and ending runaway medical inflation.

As part of the Green New Deal, we will forgive the crushing student debt burden and liberate an entire generation of young people who've been turned into indentured servants. And we will provide tuition- free public education from pre-kindergarten through college. This is an investment in our future that will pay off enormously, like the GI bill after World War II that provided seven dollars in increased tax revenue for every dollar that we the taxpayers invested.

In order to create an economy that works for people, we need not only jobs and secure social conditions. We also need a financial system free from domination by big banks and well-connected financiers who've hijacked both our economy and our democracy. Instead we will create a system that is open, honest, stable, and serves the real economy rather than the phony economy of high finance. The Green New Deal will end the bailouts and corporate give-aways, and ensure that resources are available for investments in our communities, for consumers, small business and cooperatives. Through these financial reforms:

- We will break up the banks that are too big to fail.
- We will restore the Glass-Steagall separation of commercial and speculative banks.
- We will regulate all financial derivatives and require they be traded on open exchanges.
- We will democratize monetary policy to establish public control of the money supply and credit creation.
- We will tax capital gains as income, tax Wall Street transactions to stop reckless speculation, and put a 90% tax on bonuses for bailed out bankers.

In order to secure these economic reforms we must also enact political reforms to give us a real, functioning democracy. We don't have that in America today.

To start with, we must end the domination of our elections by corporations and big money – which makes government of, by and for the people impossible. For this reason, we urgently need to amend our Constitution to make clear that corporations are not persons and money is not speech. Those rights belong to living, breathing human beings like you and me – not to business entities controlled by the wealthy. The Green New Deal will also undercut the power of lobbyists and billionaires to control elections through enactment of a Voter Bill of Rights. In so doing:

- We will guarantee a voter-marked paper ballot for all voting, and require that all votes are counted.
- We will bring simplified, same-day voter registration to the nation so no qualified voter is barred from the polls.
- We will replace partisan oversight of elections with non-partisan election commissions.
- We will restore the votes of 1.4 million Black men who are barred from voting because they are ex-felons.
- We will implement election reforms like instant runoff voting and proportional representation that more accurately reflect voter sentiment.
- We will take money out of politics and replace it with full public financing and free and equal access to the airwaves.
- We will guarantee equal access to the ballot and to the debates for all qualified candidates.

In summary, the Green New Deal is a comprehensive program for pulling back from the brink, and moving beyond the current state of emergency – for the economy, the environment and democracy. You can learn more about it on our website, jillstein.org

But there is still more to be done beyond the universe of the Green New Deal. That's why I am committed to emergency action in other areas as well.

First, I will bring the troops and war dollars home – home from the illegal and immoral wars – including the proliferating drone wars – and soldiers in over 1000 bases in over 140 countries around the world where we don't need to be. Foreign policy based on militarism and the protection of oil resources will be replaced by diplomacy based on

respect for international law and human rights.

I will restore our imperiled civil liberties by repealing the UnAmerican provisions of the PATRIOT Act, National Defense Authorization Act, Anti-Trespass Act, and the Anti-Terrorism Act which criminalize protest and direct our police to spy on non-violent dissenters. PAUSE I will prohibit the Department of Homeland Security and FBI from conspiring with local police to suppress our freedoms of assembly and of speech.

I will also work to legalize marijuana and put it into a safe, regulatory framework. Because marijuana is a substance that is dangerous because it's illegal. It's not illegal because it's dangerous.

Finally, I will end the bipartisan war on immigrants. I will stand up against discriminatory Republican laws like the remnants of Arizona's SB1070. I will stand up to the racist Republican demagoguery that wrongly blames immigrants for the unemployment brought on by Wall Street's abuse of the economy. And I will end Obama's misnamed "Secure Communities" program - which deported over 1 million immigrants, heartlessly splitting families and taking thousands of children away from their parents.

This issue gets my blood boiling.

With that track record, the Obama White House has been the most anti-immigrant administration in a century. It's true, Obama did a pre-election about face last month, giving temporary work permits to a limited number of immigrant youth. But even this fortunate group will still face deportation after age 30. On taking office, I will immediately issue an executive order to end the deportations now, I will vigorously support passage of the Dream Act, and I will work to provide a welcoming path to citizenship for undocumented Americans, who are vital members of our economy and our communities. And I will work to replace corporate so called "free trade" agreements - which generate economic refugees in the first place. These will be replaced with fair trade agreements that respect workers in this country and in Latin America.

We need these solutions. The public supports them by substantial majorities. So why haven't we gotten them?

Because the fear campaigns of the past decade have been telling us to be just be quiet and vote your fears. But we've done that now long enough to see that silence is not an effective political strategy. In fact the politics of fear has brought us everything we've been afraid of. What Democracy needs is not fear and silence, but values and voices.

It's time to answer the politics of fear with the politics of courage. As those Massachusetts radicals did when they took on the British East Indies Company, dumped tea in the harbor, and declared themselves free of the King's law. Like the abolitionists did with the Liberty Party, as women's suffragists did with the Women's Party, as working people did with the People's Party, the Socialist Party and Fighting Bob La Follette's Progressive Party. In each of these cases, independent politics was critical to formulate the political demand - which, as Frederick Douglass said, is essential because "Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will." By bringing that demand into the presidential election, we can advance the movement for democracy and justice, and drive these solutions into the political agenda.


The history of progressive politics is filled with social movements allied with independent political parties that made history together - abolishing slavery, securing women's right to vote, the right to form unions, the forty hour work week, campaign finance law, child labor laws, safe workplaces, Social Security and the New Deal.

That's what this campaign is all about – standing up and reclaiming our political voice, and our political courage. Because the moment that we do, the real aspirations of the American people can no longer be ignored. We'll have a base from which we can build, and we can start to drive forward those critical solutions that people broadly support, which Wall Street politicians have kept off the table and which we're the only vehicle for in this election. We'll give people a choice and a voice in the voting booth and enable them to go to the polls and vote for the Green New Deal and the reforms that will improve our lives right now.

I ask for your vote. And I ask for something more. Help our ballot access drives, help us raise money, help form new Green Party locals all over the country. Ensure that the voice of principled opposition will be heard now and into the future. By standing up and pushing forward with this campaign for economic and political democracy, we will signal to the world that We the People – the 99% – have taken the political stage in the United States of America once again. We will take the lead in our campaign as in our democracy. We will create an unstoppable movement. And we won't rest till we have turned the White House into a Green House, and we take back the promise of democracy and the peaceful, just, green future we deserve.

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