



## **TONIGHT AT 7: First Bottom-Up U.S. Senate *Open Debate* Can Be Viewed On Numerous TV & Online Outlets**

*The Young Turks, Independent Journal Review, C-SPAN, Huff Post Front Page, Washington Post's Plum Line, Tampa Bay Times, Others. Watch Live Feed Via YouTube At [FloridaOpenDebate.com](http://FloridaOpenDebate.com).*

**Goundbreaking “Open Feed” Allows Any TV or Online Outlet to Stream or Re-Broadcast Debate Without Violating Copyright**

**Democrat Alan Grayson vs. Republican David Jolly. Moderators Will Ask Top Questions After Over 400,000 Expected Votes at [FloridaOpenDebate.com](http://FloridaOpenDebate.com)**

**Moderators Will Be The Young Turks And Independent Journal Review. Debate Hosted By Open Debate Coalition; Co-Hosted By Americans For Tax Reform & Progressive Change Institute**

Today, the bipartisan Open Debate Coalition announced several ways to watch the first-ever U.S. Senate Open Debate taking place tonight at 7pm ET in Orlando, Florida, between Republican Congressman David Jolly (FL-13) and Democratic Congressman Alan Grayson (FL-9).

Details on how to access the debate are below:

**The Young Turks:** TYT's Cenk Uygur will moderate the debate, and the network will be livestreaming via YouTube and Facebook. Watch at [FloridaOpenDebate.com](http://FloridaOpenDebate.com) and [TYTNetwork.com](http://TYTNetwork.com). The Young Turks Network is Youtube #1 political news channel with 3 billion total views.

**Independent Journal Review:** Independent Journal Review's Benny Johnson will moderate the debate and will be offering pre-debate coverage at [INJO.com](http://INJO.com). Independent Journal Review is a social-first mobile-first news company that reaches on average more than 35 million unique viewers each month.

**C-SPAN:** C-SPAN will re-broadcast the debate on TV and online hours after the debate. C-SPAN is available in nearly 100 million households nationwide.

**Huffington Post Front Page:** Huffington Post's front page will feature tonight's debate. Huffington Post has 79 million monthly unique viewers, and it is the first online news outlet to earn a Pulitzer prize.

**Washington Post's Plumline:** The Plum Line will feature tonight's debate at [WashingtonPost.com/blogs/Plum-Line](http://WashingtonPost.com/blogs/Plum-Line).

**Tampa Bay Times:** This local outlet will be livestreaming the debate at [TampaBay.com](http://TampaBay.com). The Tampa Bay Times is the largest newspaper in the Southeast and winner of two 2016 Pulitzer prizes.

**Free Speech TV:** This indy TV station will be livestreaming the debate at [FreeSpeech.org](http://FreeSpeech.org). Free Speech Television is a national, independent, progressive news network that reaches more than 40 million television households in the United States. The network brands itself as "the alternative to television networks owned by billionaires, governments and corporations."

**Political Revolution TV:** This indy outlet will show the debate to their thousands of YouTube subscribers.

**Reader Supported News:** This indy outlet will show the debate on their YouTube channel. Reader Supported News is a new service from the creator of Truth-Out.

An unprecedented "open video feed" will allow any website or TV station to broadcast top-quality debate footage live or re-broadcast later without violating copyright. The coalition hopes this leads to millions of new debate viewers online this cycle, especially younger viewers.

**Over 400,000 votes are expected to be cast** at [FloridaOpenDebate.com](http://FloridaOpenDebate.com) by tonight's 7pm EDT debate. Anyone across the nation can submit and vote on questions. Only Florida votes will be counted when selecting questions, but others can cast votes to impact which questions are trending on the site -- influencing which questions Florida voters see and vote on most.

"Bottom-up Open Debates unite people across the political spectrum because they are not about right versus left, but new versus old," said Lilia Tamm, Program Director for the Open Debate Coalition, which is hosting tonight's debate. "With modern technology, we can utilize the wisdom of the crowds at [FloridaOpenDebate.com](http://FloridaOpenDebate.com) to bypass silly questions, gotcha questions, and questions about the news of the week -- and focus on issues voters care about most. We are thrilled to have members of Congress, moderators, and co-hosts from across the political spectrum for this historic Open Debate."

The Open Debate Coalition was started in 2008, and it includes Republican, Democratic, and Silicon Valley leaders (See a list of coalition members and the Open Debate Coalition statement below). Early leaders in the coalition include Progressive Change Institute co-founders Adam Green

and Stephanie Taylor and Americans For Tax Reform President Grover Norquist – both groups are co-hosting tonight's event.

The coalition's logo was designed by artist Shep Fairey, who designed the iconic Obama "Hope" image.

Grayson and Jolly [announced](#) they would hold debates together on March 1, 2016. The Open Debate Coalition reached out about participating in an Open Debate, and both candidates agreed.

The Open Debate Coalition used the [invitation criteria](#) of the Commission on Presidential Debates. Every candidate in the Democratic and Republican Senate primary was invited if they averaged 15% or more support in publicly released polls taken in 2016. Grayson and Jolly accepted the invitation, and Congressman Patrick Murphy (D-18) declined.

**Here is some of the buzz on Twitter. You can monitor and participate in livetweeting tonight at [#OpenDebate](#). Feel free to Tweet that you'll be watching at [FloridaOpenDebate.com](#).**



**Grover Norquist** ✓

@GroverNorquist



Follow

BIG: 300,000+ votes cast on questions for Monday's [#FLSen](#) [#OpenDebate](#). [@DavidJollyFL](#) vs. [@AlanGrayson](#). Vote here:



**U.S. Senate candidates answer YOUR questions!**

Voters set the agenda for groundbreaking [#OpenDebate](#). Tune in Mon 4/25 @7pm EDT on [TYTNetwork.com](#). Submit & vote here!

[floridaopendebate.com](#)



**Arianna Huffington** ✓  
@ariannahuff



Following

.@HuffingtonPost reports on bottom-up #OpenDebate in #FLSen: [huff.to/1SDpmlt](http://huff.to/1SDpmlt). 250K votes cast so far:



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[floridaopendebate.com](http://floridaopendebate.com)



Shepard Fairey   
@OBEYGIANT



 Follow

Ask **#FLSen** candidates what they'll do to fix campaign finance laws in experimental **#OpenDebate**. This is the future:



**Vote on this question for the FL-Sen #OpenDebate!**

"What are you going to do to reform the campaign finance system? How will you work with the President to make a viable campaign finance system? 90% of Ame..."

[floridaopendebate.com](http://floridaopendebate.com)



**craignewmark** ✓  
@craignewmark



Following

Bright spot for media reform. #FLSen candidates do bottom-up #OpenDebate, all ?'s from public. 300,000 votes so far:



**U.S. Senate candidates answer YOUR questions!**

Voters set the agenda for groundbreaking #OpenDebate. Tune in Mon 4/25 @7pm EDT on TYTNetwork.com. Submit & vote here!

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## **Open Debate Coalition Statement and Signers**

<http://OpenDebateCoalition.com/coalition-statement>

We are a coalition of people and organizations from across the ideological spectrum urging that political debates be made more “of the people” by bringing them fully into the Internet age.

Specifically, we endorse this Open Debate principle: The public should be empowered to conceive and select debate questions – so that questions addressed by candidates represent the will of the people.

This is not a matter of right versus left, but new versus old. Participatory democracy is a driving principle of the open Internet. The best ideas rise to the top, and the wisdom of crowds prevails.

Moderators can choose from among the top questions proposed and voted on by the public – and have discretion to ask follow-up questions. Many formats can be experimented with, some typical and others so innovative they have yet to be conceived.

As voter participation declines, voter-driven Open Debates that embrace the Internet’s bottom-up ethos could breathe fresh air into our democracy – and attract more young people to participate.

The members of the Open Debate Coalition don’t agree on every issue. But we agree that by bringing together the power of the Internet with the voices of voters, we can ensure that debates are truly “of the people.” We urge candidates, political parties, the media, and debate hosts to work with us and the public to transform our democracy through Open Debates. This represents the future of democracy, and we can make great strides together in the 2016 election.

Signed,

Adam Green and Stephanie Taylor (Co-Founders, Progressive Change Campaign Committee and Progressive Change Institute)

Grover Norquist (Founder, Americans for Tax Reform)

Jimmy Wales (Co-Founder, Wikipedia)

Craig Newmark (Founder, craigslist)

Cindy Cohn (Executive Director, Electronic Frontier Foundation)

Chris Kelly (Former Chief Privacy Officer, Facebook; Founder, Kelly Investments; Chair, Organizer Inc.)

Terry O’Neill (President, National Organization for Women)

Mindy Finn (Former Digital Strategy Director, Mitt Romney; Former Senior Digital Advisor, Republican National Committee; Founder, Empowered Women)

Tim O’Reilly (Founder, O’Reilly Media)

Rashad Robinson (Executive Director, ColorOfChange.org)

Paul Rieckhoff (Executive Director, Iraq & Afghanistan Veterans of America)

Michael Turk (Former eCampaign Director, Republican National Committee and Bush/Cheney '04)

Anna Galland and Ilya Sheyman (Executive Directors, MoveOn.org Civic and Political Action)

Ilyse Hogue (President, NARAL Pro-Choice America)

Shepard Fairey (Artist known for iconic Obama “Hope” poster)

Albert Jacquez (Deputy Executive Director, National Council of La Raza Action Fund)

Jon Henke (Former New Media Director, U.S. Senate Republicans and Fred Thompson for President; Strategic Director, TechFreedom)

Cenk Uygur, Host, The Young Turks.

Nita Chaudhary (Co-Executive Director, UltraViolet)

Chris Shelton (President, Communications Workers of America)

Michael Brune (Executive Director, Sierra Club)

Markos Moulitsas (Founder, DailyKos)

Glenn Reynolds (Founder, Instapundit)

Joichi Ito (Director, MIT Media Lab)

Cory Doctorow (Author, blogger, journalist)

David Moore (Executive Director, AskThem.io, Participatory Politics Foundation)

Ethan Zuckerman (Director, MIT Center for Civic Media)

Jared Friedman (Founder, Scribd; Partner, Y Combinator)

Marvin Ammori (Lawyer, Technology Strategist)

Micah Sifry and Andrew Rasiej (Co-Founders, Personal Democracy Media, Civic Hall)

Jim Dean (Chair, Democracy for America)

May Boeve (Executive Director, 350 Action)

Roy Beck (President, NumbersUSA)

Joseph Bast (President & CEO, The Heartland Institute)

Alex Lawson (Executive Director, Social Security Works)



Alexandra Flores-Quilty (President, United States Student Association)  
Christopher Long (President, Intercollegiate Studies Institute)  
David Segal (Executive Director, Demand Progress and Rootstrikers)  
Peter Wood & Ashley Thorne (President & Executive Director, National Association of Scholars)  
Kenneth Roth (Executive Director, Human Rights Watch)  
Murshed Zaheed (Political Director, CREDO Action)  
Rea Carey (Executive Director, National LGBTQ Task Force Action Fund)  
Crowdpac  
Greenpeace  
Robert Greenwald (Founder, Brave New Films)  
Marissa Brown (Executive Director, Democracy Initiative)  
Miles Rapoport (President, Common Cause)

Arianna Huffington is also a member of the Open Debate Coalition.

## **Note from Mike McCurry, Co-Chair Of The Commission On Presidential Debates, To The Open Debate Coalition. Shared With Permission.**

I have enjoyed our discussions about how to improve the general election debates and better fulfill the mission of the Commission on Presidential Debates to make the fall debates as educational as possible for American voters.

The Commission is watching the primary debates closely looking for innovation.

We are especially interested in how the Internet and social media can be utilized to generate real questions from real people. We'd be especially interested in any experiments or new technologies the Open Debates Coalition employs during the primary season to generate questions from the American public and put them – via a journalist/moderator – to the candidates. We have a working group exploring many ideas about debate formats, and we hope to build on those things that are working to create a more vibrant public debate.

This is a real opportunity to shape the future of presidential debates, not only in the primaries but the general election as well. We'll be watching your progress with great interest.

All best,

Mike McCurry  
Co-Chairman,  
Commission on Presidential Debates

## **OPEN DEBATE COALITION BACKGROUND**

During the 2008 presidential campaign, a coalition of progressives, conservatives, and Silicon Valley leaders launched the Open Debate Coalition to make debates more representative of the will of the people. In the Open Debate format, regular voters across the nation submit and vote on questions on an online platform in advance of the debate. For the live event, moderators choose from among the questions that received the most votes – asking follow-up questions along the way.

The original coalition included Jimmy Wales (Wikipedia), Craig Newmark (craigslist), Democracy for America, MoveOn, the National Organization for Women, the Sierra Club, Adam Green (Progressive Change), Grover Norquist (Americans for Tax Reform), DailyKos, RedState, National Organization of Women, Newt Gingrich (American Solutions), Arianna Huffington, Aaron Swartz (Reddit), former digital directors for the Republican National Committee and George W. Bush, and leaders from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, ColorOfChange.org, and many [others](#).

The coalition saw amazing success. [Our initial request was that networks put presidential debate video in the public domain or Creative Commons to allow debate moments to have a life online without legal peril](#). Within weeks, [CNN](#), [ABC](#), [NBC](#), and CBS agreed. The coalition then announced bottom-up Open Debate principles to make questions represent what the public cared about, and the [Obama and McCain](#) campaigns both endorsed them. In August 2013, the Progressive Change Campaign Committee sponsored [the first-ever Open Debate](#) in a Massachusetts special election for Congress. Over 1,600 [questions were submitted](#), over 79,000 votes were cast, and all five candidates participated and loved it. Instead of questions about [the horserace and the gaffe of the week](#), the top questions were all substantive. Many were on issues that the media rarely ask about. In late 2014, a similar bottom-up process yielded over 1 million votes. An Open Debate featuring the presidential candidates would have more participation by an order of magnitude.

The coalition has expanded its membership in advance of the 2016 elections, adding tech luminaries such as Tim O'Reilly (O'Reilly Media) and Chris Kelly (former Chief Privacy Officer at Facebook), as well as numerous issue-based groups such as Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. The coalition has also invested in technology enhancements so the question platform can accommodate traffic volumes that would accompany a larger, national event – and artist Shep Fairey, who designed the iconic Obama “Hope” poster, has joined the coalition and designed our logo.