



Ezra Levin in Colorado

Ezra Levin, co-author of the *Indivisible Guide*, spent several days in our fair state meeting with various activists. Here's a collection of impressions, mostly from his meeting in Denver.

Please email us at indivisiblecolorado@gmail.com with any corrections or updates from your own meetings.

These notes are from Jody Rein, Susan Noble, Brad Wells, Tracey Cronin, Pedro Lira & Bruce Norikane. Writer's initials are next to comments.

GENERAL:

- Ezra is a sweetheart. He's passionate about the issues and unapologetically progressive. He's also friendly, open, accessible and patient. Stayed till the bitter end-a good number of the people there left before he did. *JR*
- He is very accessible and humble, and encouraging of de-centralized local and regional work, and very interested in learning and supporting what we and other regions and states are doing. He was generally hesitant to make strong points. *BW*
- Ezra covered a lot of territory ...*SN*
- National is working hard to become something, and seems to be doing a good job finding knowledgeable people to help. It's still undeniably a young organization, with limited ability to provide tools and support. *IMO. JR*
- Life in some Colorado rural areas where billionaires want to gentrify really, really, really sucks. *JR*
- Leah is Ezra's wife. Yes they are new and building the airplane in flight. *BW*
- This is great y'all. I have more thoughts on these notes but I wanted to point out for now that the tickets for flights and hotel rooms have already been booked for Phoenix. Anyone is welcome to attend but at this point you have to pay your own way. That being said, there will be future Institutes y'all can attend so there will be more opportunities. *PL*

POLICIES AND PHILOPHIES

- Lots of discussion around what Indivisible can and can't do to endorse candidates and work with political parties.
 - He emphasized the importance of having something real to offer candidates, so that an Indivisible endorsement has value. I got the sense that sort of flew under the radar at the meeting. He said endorsements matter if they provide money, name clout or...people. What we have is people. He was saying that if we offer an endorsement, it should come with something of value, and for us, what we have to offer (or NOT offer) is people. *JR*
- "Power concedes nothing without a demand." Don't remember the context, but liked the quote. I think it had to do with this other quote: "Make representatives earn our support." *JR*
- Lots of talk around diversity and youth. Takeaways-meet people where they are. Offer to help existing organizations. *JR*
- Lack of a decision-making structure can hurt groups. *JR*
- Re importance of decision-making structure- he strongly mentioned "consensus is not effective" *BW*

- Ezra made a strong point about the main advantage to Indivisibles getting involved with elections before the primaries. He pointed out rightly that if we want to shape what Congress looks like, we have to push hard for the candidates we think would best represent our districts. *TC*
- Susan told us the same thing about getting in early with candidates last spring. She had us all lined up with several 2018 candidates for ENGAGE, until we nixed candidates for legal reasons. *BW*
- One extra point is he does want us to channel as much as possible through Pedro. *BW*
- I also heard Ezra say that Indivisible national will be working on policy positions and seeking input from groups as these positions are crafted before the end of the year. He said they want to be as transparent as possible. *SN*
- He laughed that he might seem to be “dodging” the question about navigating the various factions inside and outside the official Democratic Party. He said they are concerned about division around 2018 elections, particularly at the national level, since we have been unified around Trump agenda resistance to this point. He noted that some groups have administrator rules whereby posts are allowed that support or oppose policies or values, but cannot name names (i.e. Hillary-Bernie). Ezra didn’t take a party position. I don’t think anyone can assume Indivisible members followed any single candidate but instead may have come to Indivisible to channel energy and frustration about the Electoral College winner. This would be particularly true in Colorado where our primary and general elections were split. Seems important to be sensitive to this possibility as we move forward, imo. *SN*

TOOLS and INITIATIVES

- They created IndivisibleHQ for group leaders...which sounds super valuable. However, no idea how you get invited or join. Bruce? That would be important info for us to share, yes? *JR*
- Yes we need to be able to gain access to Indivisible HQ. *BW*
- Their big initiative, to the tune of \$200,000 is investing in a cooperative voter database. Other groups like ProgressNow etc will share the costs and use. This is being created as a separate entity. It is NOT shareable with political parties. However, having a single database for all progressive activists to share and update is a big step toward powerful alliances. *JR*
- Another big initiative: “Indivisible Regional Institutes.” The first is happening this weekend in Phoenix. Message was a little mixed about this. They’re

excited that Marshall Ganz is advising them to create a “training of trainers.” These trainings have 2 goals, similar to our Summit:

1. Increase skills training (next Summit)
 2. Build relationships. But he sort of discouraged going to trainings that weren't local, as the networking piece is important, and said he hoped we would have one closer to Colorado soon. So...when I got there I was thinking about applying for a scholarship to go this weekend & have fun being there with Tracey 😊—now, I'm not so sure. *JR*
- He recommended AGAINST groups forming legal entities. And mentioned very good news around that. Sounds like Indivisible National is rolling out ways for groups to get advantages of entities without having to form them.
 1. C4 letter: They will provide a C4 letter they can provide for groups to use. I didn't fully understand that—anyone else?
 2. Liability Insurance: This may be related to the letter. It sounded as if groups can be covered under an Indivisible National policy.
 3. Fundraising. This is the biggie. They're creating a means for groups to fundraise through ActBlue without having to form a legal entity to do so. *JR*
 - As Jody noted, Ezra offered Indivisible national's C4, but he didn't go into details. I figured Pedro will have those answers. And any money we raise will be ours, and national will be pass-through. Makes our lives a lot easier. *SN*
 - They know their map is bad on the website. They're working on it. They hired a “digital organizer” from 350.org. He didn't fully understand the request for a single place to post and find events, which groups could embed on their sites. But he told me to email so I will. *JR*
 - Ezra mentioned in particular that Mass and Oklahoma (!?) had very successful Indivisible Summits, so Pedro how can we get with those organizers to compare notes? Other states? *BW*
 - Brad mentioned Oklahoma. I believe Ezra said there were 900 attendees at this “convention”. He and Leah were speakers. *SN*