



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SAM—THE SERVE AMERICA MOVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

The American political system has been hijacked by the two incumbent political parties. Instead of governing in the best interest of the country, they remain locked in tribal hyper-partisanship. They block progress toward the common good, engage in a zero-sum fight for power, avoid or simply fail to find solutions to important issues, and collude to use their political duopoly to assure that voters have no viable alternatives other than the candidates they choose to field. (Why Competition In The Politics Industry Is Failing America). As a result, both Democrats and Republicans consistently offer candidates and positions that serve their own interests rather than those of the American people. The problem permeates all levels of government, federal, state, and local. As a result, the very existence of our democracy is at great risk.

SAM is a coalition of deeply concerned patriots from across the country. We're building a new political party for those who are disillusioned with the two parties and who believe that now is the time to reclaim our collective voice, our shared future, and our country. SAM's goal is to disrupt the two party political structure by creating a new national party from the ground up—a New Party for a New Majority.

Q1: “NEVER TRUMPER” ORIGINS: IS SAM LARGELY COMPOSED OF NEVER-TRUMPERS?

A. No. Our original founders were Republicans and Democrats who believed the two parties were not dealing with the critical issues confronting our country. At our founding convention in Philadelphia, SAM's Founders were evenly split between Republicans, Democrats and independents. Today, we are committed to becoming a disruptive force, working outside the two major parties and have committed ourselves to creating a new party that will reflect the views and priorities of a majority of Americans. SAM formed not simply as a reaction to Donald Trump, but as a result of the realization of its Founders and members that the two dominant political parties (and the political industrial complex that supports and lives off of them) consistently serve only themselves, that they primarily seek to continuing in power, that they systematically thwart competition from others by abuse of their entrenched duopoly power. Unless challenged and removed from dominance, they will continue to fail our country.



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Q2. SUPPORT FROM PUBLIC FIGURES: WHAT PUBLIC FIGURES/POLITICIANS, IF ANY, WILL SUPPORT YOU PUBLICLY?

A. We are not alone. We are continually talking to people involved with governing and policy around the country about supporting SAM. Many are interested and want to hear more. Many also believe themselves trapped within their party and are reluctant to break free of that stranglehold. In any disruptive start up organization, particularly one where the barriers to entry are so high, a long step-by-step process is required. We are in this for the long haul and we are taking those steps with the goal of building a party in all 50 states.

Q3. FAILURE OF PAST EFFORTS: WHY DO YOU THINK YOU WILL SUCCEED WHERE SO MANY OTHERS HAVE FAILED FOR OVER 150 YEARS?

A. Looking back at the most recent third party or independent efforts, they share three common traits: They appealed to the extremes, they were entirely top down, and they focused on an individual candidate in an individual race.

SAM's approach is different. We are building a new party focused on a new majority of Americans from the mainstream of American opinion. We are starting from the bottom and working our way up. We're rolling up our sleeves and doing the enormously hard but necessary work of recruiting Leaders and Members and building infrastructure throughout the country. While others have similar goals to better represent mainstream views, they typically have focused on supporting moderate members of the two dominant parties. They also rely on the two parties for access to the ballot or on recruiting independent candidates who will obtain ballot access in their individual capacities and work together, once elected. By contrast, we are focused on building an entirely new infrastructure and achieving the state by state ballot access that is the framework for building a sustainable alternative new party—a new party that can disrupt the two dominant parties of today and then repeal the laws and end the practices they have used to maintain their dominance, exclude competition, and deprive the American public of the electoral choices they want and deserve.

Q4. CURRENT PARTY AFFILIATION ISSUE: WILL SAM MEMBERS HAVE TO ABANDON THEIR CURRENT PARTY AFFILIATIONS?

A. No.



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Q5. SPOILER ISSUE: IF YOU SUCCEED IN GETTING BALLOT ACCESS, WON'T YOUR CANDIDATES JUST SERVE AS SPOILERS?

A. The very question about “spoilers” starts from the proposition that the two dominant parties have not already spoiled the system and that the current electoral system is producing the results our citizens want. We reject that fundamentally. Will the availability of additional choices change the results? We hope and expect so. Is there a risk that additional choices will result in the election of non-SAM candidates who may be more rather than less partisan? That is, of course, possible. But we will take great care to select races and candidates where the SAM candidate has a reasonable and demonstrable chance of success against major party candidates whose views are fundamentally inconsistent with our Founding Principles and our Priorities.

Q6. CANDIDATES IN 2018: WILL YOU RUN OR SUPPORT ANY CANDIDATES IN 2018?

A. We are considering several races in several states. Our overarching goal is to begin the process of getting access to ballots as a party on an ongoing basis. There are 50 states, each with their own rules and regulations governing the path to gaining ballot access and becoming a party. This is one of the ways the duopoly has prevented new parties from emerging. We intend to break through those barriers, state by state.

Q7. 2020 PRESIDENTIAL RACE: HOW AND WHEN WILL YOU DECIDE WHETHER TO GET INVOLVED IN THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL RACE?

A. We currently do not know whether or how we will be involved in the 2020 Presidential race. Our involvement will depend on the political environment, the speed at which we've been able to achieve ballot access, and how our national and state organizations decide to participate.

Q8. 2020 SPOILER RISK WILL JUST HELP TRUMP: IF A SAM CANDIDATE ENTERS THE 2020 POTUS RACE, WON'T THAT JUST ASSURE TRUMP'S RE-ELECTION?

A. The greatest need for SAM or for any other party independent of the two dominant parties will be in a race that pits Trump against a candidate from the extreme left. On the other hand, we will not associate ourselves with any ticket we perceive as having little chance of success and as likely to harm rather than enhance the chance of electing a leader whose views are consistent with our Founding Principles and our Priorities.



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Q9. SUPPORT FOR 2020 INDEPENDENT POTUS CANDIDATE: WHAT WILL YOU DO IF AN INDEPENDENT CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT WHO IS ATTRACTIVE TO SAM AND WILLING TO ADHERE TO ITS PRIORITIES AND ITS FOUNDING PRINCIPLES BEGINS TO RUN ON HIS OR HER OWN AND ASKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT?

A. We will make that decision as an organization if and when the time comes. While the Presidency is paramount in American politics, we are working to change American politics for the long term, from the ground up.

Q10. POLICIES: WHAT ARE SAM'S FUNDAMENTAL POLICIES?

A. We were formed around a set of Founding Principles and, at the federal level, have agreed on certain Priorities and on an agreed set of qualities reflected in our Candidate Criteria. We will require candidates seeking to carry the SAM banner and state-based organizations seeking to affiliate with SAM to subscribe to these Priorities and Founding Principles. At the same time, we profess no monopoly on wisdom and will not dictate “one-size fits all” policy positions from the top down. Instead, our candidates will be responsible for shaping and running for office on their own platforms which are consistent with our agreed Founding Principles and Priorities.

B. We will avoid policies that are narrowly tailored to interest groups and political purists for whom division and discord are the orders of the day. Instead, the policies of SAM's state organizations and of its candidates will be consistent with our Founding Principles which, while broad, are guardrails within which we expect our state affiliates and candidates to operate. In substance, those Founding Principles and our policy Priorities reflect a perspective that is socially tolerant and inclusive, modern and forward looking, free market oriented, and fiscally and environmentally responsible to future generations.

C. SAM is finalizing an initial platform of policies that address our core Priorities and that are, we believe, illustrative of the types of policies a truly representative government might enact. These policies will reflect our belief that, as an organization, we should be objectives-based in our politics and governance. It will be up to SAM's candidates to lay out specific policy proposals, consistent with our Founding Principles and our Priorities.

Q11. CURRENT FOCUS: WHAT STATES ARE YOU CURRENTLY FOCUSING ON AND WHY?

A. Over the first five months of 2018, we focused on Kansas as our pilot state, exploring different methods of engagement and testing our People Up Process. We are currently reviewing the next tranche of states to enter in Phase Two of our efforts. As we move forward, we will make the determination of where to focus further efforts based on (a) the cost and possibility of acquiring ballot access, (b) the availability of candidates who we believe will be effective carriers of the SAM message, and (c) the ability to advance any political reform priorities.



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Q12. FUNDING: WILL YOU TAKE PAC OR CORPORATE MONEY?

A. As a nascent party, we will abide by all applicable state and federal laws regarding the receipt of contributions and the making of contributions and expenditures by a political party in aid of party building and candidate support and we will fully and rapidly disclose the identity of any donors who are not individuals.

Q13. ENGAGEMENT: ISN'T YOUR PEOPLE UP PROCESS JUST A FORM OF POLICY BY POLL OR REFERENDUM?

A. No. The People Up Process is a way of connecting citizens with each other and building shared energy by creating an ongoing process for individual voters to engage with each other and with SAM. It is designed so that they can hear each other's views on whatever issues are on their minds and share their concerns about their communities, their states, their nation, and our broken political system. It is a way of introducing them to one another, raising the issues that concern them, and showing them visibly and in real time that they are a part of something bigger, part of the real majority, part of something that can succeed. We expect this process of engagement to lead to the self-identification and recruitment of SAM Leaders and Members—creating a self-sustaining and organic community of communities. The constant engagement and feedback loop amongst the community, allows voters to hear and see what others are saying, thus feeding the grassroots and community networks that will allow SAM's state affiliates and SAM as a national federation to grow into a credible and competitive political party.

Q14. SUPPORT FOR REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS: WILL SAM SUPPORT REPUBLICAN OR DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES AND, IF SO, ON WHAT BASIS?

A. Supporting candidates who are running as Republicans and Democrats—and are dependent on the two parties for their access to the ballot and access to the money and power of the political-industrial complex that surrounds them—would be antithetical to our fundamental goal.

Q15. PURSUIT OF ELECTORAL REFORMS: WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING (AND WHAT HAVE YOU DONE IN THE PAST YEAR) TO FURTHER YOUR STATED GOAL OF PUSHING FOR YOUR SIX ELECTORAL REFORMS?

A. We are communicating with reform groups and candidates across the country to introduce SAM, our Founding Principles, and our Priorities and to explore potential avenues for partnership. In those states in which political reform ballot measures will be on the November ballot, we will consider endorsement of their efforts and the potential for more active involvement.



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Q16. CONTRIBUTIONS TO CANDIDATES: WILL YOU MAKE CONTRIBUTIONS TO, OR EXPENDITURES ON BEHALF OF, CANDIDATES YOU SUPPORT AS OR THROUGH A 527/PAC OR OTHERWISE?

A. We plan to act like any political party in supporting SAM-affiliated entities and any candidates running under the SAM banner, to the extent permitted by law.

Q17. A NEW PARTY: IF THE TWO MAJOR PARTIES ARE THE PROBLEM, HOW CAN A “NEW PARTY” BE THE ANSWER?

A. The problem is not parties as such, but how these two parties have hijacked the system for their own self-preservation and benefit. One of SAM’s core priorities is to open up the political system and prevent any party from co-opting and blocking out others. Practically speaking, there are clear advantages to organizing like-minded voters into a party that governs in an open way—recruiting, fundraising, and sustained ballot access, for example.

Q18. SELF INTEREST: ISN’T YOUR GOAL TO JUST BECOME ANOTHER POWERFUL THIRD WHEEL AND WON’T YOU SUCCUMB TO THE SAME PRESSURES OF SELF-INTEREST IN THE NAME OF SELF-PRESERVATION?

A. We agree with former Congressman Mickey Edwards’ sentiments in his book, *The Parties vs. the People*: “Having political parties—that is having Americans—gather together to support common goals is an essential ingredient of the democratic process, but allowing them to also dictate how we elect our officials and how we govern our nation is an unfathomable surrender of our rights as a people to decide how we will be governed.”

Q19. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GROUPS (UNITE AMERICA): ARE YOU COORDINATING WITH UNITE AMERICA (FORMERLY THE CENTRIST PROJECT) AND, IF NOT, WHY NOT?

A. We are in regular contact with Unite America. As of now, they are focused on electing independent candidates and have affirmatively decided not to seek to achieve sustainability beyond any given election cycle. By contrast, our ambitions are longer term. We seek to secure ballot access as a party, to build party infrastructure, and to recruit and support candidates who will utilize that ballot access and infrastructure in order to force deeper more permanent change. However, some of our efforts will indeed overlap with those of Unite America, and to the extent we are complementary to one another, we welcome the opportunity to cooperate with them.



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Q20. RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER GROUPS (NO LABELS): ARE YOU COORDINATING WITH NO LABELS AND, IF NOT, WHY NOT?

A. We agree with almost all policies that No Labels advocates and we support those efforts. However, their mission is to support members of the two major parties who have joined their “Problem Solvers” caucus. The members of their caucus (some 40 members in the House and two Senators) intend to remain within the two-party system and are subject to the challenge of having to run in primaries that tend to be dominated by highly partisan extremists. No Labels has responded to this reality by raising and spending important sums of money to support their members in primary challenges, spending over \$1 million in one recent primary to protect the seat of one of their members. We think the No Labels approach addresses the symptom but not the true cause of the problem. We seek to address what we view as the real issue—the lack of ballot access for any competitor outside the duopoly and the duopoly’s joint exercise of their electoral power to exclude all forms of competition.

The major difference between us and No Labels is that they are working with and within the existing two parties and the political industrial complex that surrounds those two parties. We, by contrast, are focused on building a New Party for a New Majority, from the ground up, in an effort to disrupt the status quo and start fresh.

Q21. INTERACTIONS WITH EXISTING INDEPENDENT PARTIES: HOW DO YOU INTEND TO INTERACT WITH EXISTING INDEPENDENT PARTIES IN STATES SUCH AS MAINE, ALASKA ETC.

A. Our organizational model is one where there will be separate SAM entities in each state. In a sense, each state organization can be viewed as sharing the national SAM franchise and having the flexibility to be a focused local entity. Consistent with that model, we are studying the various independent parties and will happily affiliate with any who are interested in working with SAM and are prepared to subscribe to our Founding Principles and our Priorities.



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Q22. INTERACTIONS WITH INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES: HOW DO YOU INTEND TO INTERACT WITH INDEPENDENT CANDIDATES RUNNING ON THEIR OWN?

A. We will consider supporting independent candidates on a case by case basis where the independent candidate subscribes to our Founding Principles and our Priorities, meets our Candidate Criteria.

Q23. PARTNERING WITH LIKE MINDED GROUPS: IF THERE IS ANY HOPE OF SUCCESS IN FORMING A NEW PARTY, WON'T IT BE NECESSARY FOR SOMEONE TO ORGANIZE A COALITION OF GROUPS SUCH AS SAM, UNITE THE CENTER AND ALL THE SIMILAR GROUPS WORKING TO CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE TWO MAIN PARTIES?

A. There are dozens of groups in the political reform space and all of them doing important work. We believe that as SAM and others begin to show success, some consolidation can and should occur. We would view that as a positive development, as it would mean that Americans are taking seriously the need to radically change the political system.

For more about SAM—the Serve America Movement—or to become a Member, Leader or donor, please visit www.joinsam.org.



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