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Rocky Anderson forms Justice Party, plans to run for president

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SALT LAKE CITY — Former Salt Lake City Mayor **Rocky Anderson** has formed a new political party and plans to run for president.

To be known as the Justice Party, Anderson sees it as a grassroots movement that over the long term will bring about the shift in American politics that he says citizens crave.

"The people are the ones who always bring about major change in this country, and we need to provide that power to people throughout the country," he said Wednesday on KSL Radio's Doug Wright Show.

"They want to see an alternative party. They recognize that these two militarist, corporatist parties have brought us to this disastrous place to where we are today."

One of Utah's most liberal politicians, Anderson renounced his affiliation with the Democratic Party in August, saying he was fed up with it along with Congress, the Obama administration and Republicans. He reiterated that disgust during the interview.

"We've been voting as a nation against our own interests year after year," he said. "Most Americans — whether they consider themselves on the right, left, center, whatever — understand that their interests have been undermined by these folks in Washington, both in the White House and in Congress, who are acting as if they're on retainer with their largest campaign contributors rather than doing what's in the public's interest."

Anderson, executive director of **High Road for Humans Rights**, threw out the idea of a new political party in the summer, but said he had no plans to run for office.

Since organizing the Justice Party, he has filled out paperwork for a presidential exploratory committee. The party must also go about the arduous task of getting on election ballots nationwide. Criteria varies state to state but may include past electoral performance or a petition process.

University of Utah political science professor Matthew Burbank said establishing a new party is a "very, very difficult endeavor" that requires lots of time and money.

"I think he has kind of a long-term issues agenda, but that is separate from what it takes to get a third party up and running," Burbank said.

There is a certain level of discontent with U.S. politics and Anderson's message may resonate with some such as the Occupy Wall Street crowd, Burbank said. The party, he said, could carve out a fraction of those who otherwise vote Democrat and some independents, but not a significant number of Republicans.

"I can't see this as anything other than a very long shot," he said.

Anderson said he expects to attract disenchanted members of both parties and independents.

"I just hope we can be involved in the debate, because if we don't we're just going to be hearing a bunch of sound bites from people who between their two parties have colluded in so many

ways in serving the interests of their campaign contributors, the wealthy and the powerful," he said.

"If you put passion and organization together, we can overcome any of these candidates who have all the money but really lack ideas."

Anderson said "outrageous, expensive" wars have wasted lives and tax dollars the past decade. The government, he said, has driven up the deficit, while cutting taxes for those most capable of paying them. Also, leaders have failed to provide affordable, essential health care for all Americans.

"The middle class has been decimated," he said.

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