



**DEMOCRATIC VICTORY TASK FORCE**  
**FINAL REPORT *and* ACTION PLAN**

## NOTE FROM THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIR

NOVEMBER 17, 2015



### DEAR DEMOCRATIC FAMILY:

First and foremost, thank you. The work you are doing to elect Democrats and support progressive values and initiatives is critical not only to continuing President Barack Obama's vision for this country but to ensuring that the American dream is accessible to more hardworking men and women across the nation.

After the 2014 midterm losses, it was time for the Democratic National Committee to take a hard look at what the Party needed to do to make sure we don't repeat the same mistakes of the last decade as we approach the next presidential, midterm, and reapportionment election cycles. We can only move forward by taking a look back, evaluating our successes as well as our failures and constantly be learning the lessons each election teaches us. To that end, I gathered a diverse group of Democratic loyalists – the Democratic Victory Task Force – who not only brought their unique perspectives but also the work ethic we needed to convene meetings and record every voice in the Democratic Party from donors to activists to elected leaders to staff and consultants. I'm proud to have worked with this professional and passionate group of Democrats.

In February, the Task Force released a set of recommendations for the DNC and detailed what we needed to do to address holes in our Party infrastructure. We immediately took action and over the last nine months, our team at the DNC has renegotiated contracts, made additional investments in our infrastructure, and increased our training programs. The Task Force shifted from an outside advisory group to a working group focused on every department within the DNC. Together we are turning recommendations into reality, strengthening our Party and the existing relationships we had with state parties, candidates, and our allies.

The Democratic Victory Action Plan that follows is the product of what the Democratic Party can do when we focus on our strengths, acknowledge our weaknesses and work together to share ideas and quickly execute new programs. Together, we are finding new and innovative ways to stretch a dollar, contact more voters, and excite Democrats. Many readers of the Action Plan will see the result of their intimate involvement and for others much of this will be new. This is only the beginning. There are projects that are currently underway as well as projects we need to execute immediately, so that when we win the White House the entire Democratic Party is in a better position leading up to and after the 2020 reapportionment. We must ensure that the next Democratic president has a Congress with whom he or she can work.

Again, thank you for the work you have already done to move this Party forward and thank you for the work you do every day to ensure the Democratic Party has the strength we need to win elections, maintain President Obama's legacy, and build lasting Democratic legacies that benefit all Americans. I look forward to hearing your feedback on the Action Plan and continuing this work together.

**On to victory!**



U.S. Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Chair, Democratic National Committee

## LETTER ON BEHALF OF THE DEMOCRATIC VICTORY TASK FORCE



### TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

A stronger Democratic Party means a better future for all Americans. Understanding how we turn that idea into electoral success has been the primary goal of the Democratic Victory Task Force formed after the 2014 elections by Democratic National Committee Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz. After a resounding presidential election victory in 2012, Democratic losses in the 2014-midterm elections made clear that the Party needed to replicate its national success at every level.

Over the past year, the Task Force reviewed research, received evaluations from outside experts, and heard from thousands of Democrats across the country. We aimed to discover where they thought the Democratic Party was falling short and chart a path forward to build on our electoral success at the presidential level while improving outcomes across the ballot, particularly in midterm elections.

It is crucial for all Democrats to fully understand what is happening on the other side of the aisle. Back in 2012, the GOP vowed to become more open and inclusive and – frankly – palatable. That rebranding effort has now been tossed into the incinerator by the Party’s own candidates and it carries ominous repercussions for the future of this country.

Listen to the candidates seeking the GOP presidential nomination, and you hear that our economic model should help the rich get richer, women should not make their own health decisions, immigrants are rapists, and foreign policy consists of beating our chest and making threats. The GOP narrative, once again, plays on fear, frustration and bitterness and disregards the substantial improvements on indicators like employment and economic growth that have taken place under seven years of Democratic leadership in the White House.

Unfortunately, loud rhetoric can be enticing, as the Donald Trump phenomenon shows, so we need now more than ever to claim our mantle as the political party of reason and fairness. We also need to continue to promote innovation and prosperity for all.

Democrats are not sitting helplessly on the sidelines while this great country is taken back to the 20th century! We must act now, and this report shows how we are engaged in better channeling the energy and enthusiasm of Democrats all across the country.

The Task Force was asked to include and represent diverse points of view, constituencies, and approaches. After a series of focus groups and listening sessions, a national survey of the DNC membership, and meetings with representatives from dozens of organizations that share our common values, we released a set of preliminary recommendations for strengthening the Democratic Party at the national, state, and local levels. Those recommendations became a blueprint that the Task Force was able to work off of and begin the task of implementing and directing real change within the Democratic Party. This document is a roadmap for how the DNC will implement these recommendations, strengthen its operations and better define its role in helping all Democrats engage and win elections.

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Some of these programs are already underway. Some will be easy to implement, while others may take significant funds or a new level of cooperation within the Democratic Party. But as Barbara Jordan once said, “We are a Party of innovation. We do not reject our traditions, but we are

willing to adapt to changing circumstances, when change we must. We are willing to suffer the discomfort of change in order to achieve a better future.”

At its core, the mission of the Democratic Party is to engage people in the democratic process. Working together, I believe we can revitalize the Party and re-engage the American people. We can remain the political party committed to innovation, empowerment and inclusion.

And I believe we must succeed—because a bright future for hardworking Americans begins with a strong Democratic Party.

**Sincerely,  
Governor Steve Beshear**

On behalf of the Democratic Victory Task Force

Naomi Aberly  
Donna Brazile  
Maria Cardona  
Marc Elias  
Teddy Goff  
Maneesh Goyal  
Rick Palacio  
Lee Saunders  
Eric Schmidt

## INTRODUCTION

For more than 150 years, the Democratic National Committee has trained generations of Democratic staffers, supported hundreds of campaigns, fought to secure the voting rights of millions and helped thousands of candidates design and win campaigns across the country.

There are functions that only the Democratic National Committee can and should be doing, such as defining our common values, leading efforts to define Republicans, and defending our leaders and candidates from attacks.

It is the DNC's job, for example, to make sure all Republican presidential candidates are held accountable and called out for reckless policies that would move America backward. In 2012, the DNC was instrumental in creating and executing a contrast narrative that highlighted the work President Barack Obama had done to move this country forward – taking our country from the precipice of economic disaster to recovery, expanding health care for millions of Americans, constantly defending our civil liberties and expanding opportunities for everyone in America.

Compared to the outdated and offensive policies Governor Mitt Romney promised to enact if he were elected President of the United States, the choice was clear. Americans needed to know that the Democratic Party has been and always will be on their side. To achieve this goal, the DNC went into debt to win the White House and other races. The money borrowed and spent gave the Obama campaign the resources it needed to successfully demonstrate the contrast between a Democrat in the White House versus a Republican and it led to Democratic victories up and down the ballot.

Chair Wasserman Schultz and the DNC leadership team then went about the business of paying down the 2012 Obama campaign debt and rebuilding resources in advance of the 2014 midterms. They simultaneously charted a path to become debt-free while maintaining and strengthening investments in programs and tools needed to sustain the Democratic state parties and candidates. The effort began to lay the groundwork for recent state and local elections as well as the 2016 presidential, and 2020 redistricting elections.

However, the 2014 midterms made it abundantly clear that while Americans overwhelmingly support the issues and values that the Democratic Party fights for every day – voting to raise the minimum wage and protecting women's health care choices – our down ballot candidates were not connecting with voters and lacked some fundamental infrastructure and support to convey their message.

While Democrats faced a challenging map in 2014 that favored Republicans at the congressional level given the number of seats each party had to defend, Democrats also suffered losses at other levels of government. Since 2008, the Democratic Party has lost 69 House seats; 13 Senate seats; more than 900 state legislative seats; 30 state legislative chambers; and 12 governorships.

In addition, the effects of decades-long changes to campaign finance laws have not only changed the way the DNC operates but also the programs it can fund and partnerships and alliances it builds. Democratic groups created in the 1990s and 2000s to counter the Republican Party's massive web of third-party organizations are largely stable, well-funded, and serving many of the core functions that the DNC has previously served, which required the Party to reassess its core strengths, functions, and role in support of our candidates.

Chair Wasserman Schultz, immediately following the November 2014 elections, created the Democratic Victory Task Force. The mission of the Task Force was simple: Examine the last several election cycles by soliciting actionable ideas from the entire Democratic family as to how we can improve the long-term strength of the national Democratic Party.

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The Task Force was instructed to be as inclusive as possible – to all points of view, constituencies, and approaches – to ensure a clear set of recommendations as to how we can better define the DNC’s role, strengthen the Democratic Party at the national, state, and local levels, and ultimately set Democrats up for electoral successes, and to support an action plan to implement the recommendations.

## **TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP**

Chair Wasserman Schultz appointed a diverse group of strategists, donors, and activists who could evaluate the Party’s challenges and collect best practices, in order to identify an effective strategy. They were tasked with answering the following questions:

- What is the role of the DNC today looking forward to the 2016 presidential election, the 2018 midterm elections, and reapportionment following a 2020 census?
- How does the DNC build on its successes, especially its digital voter data supremacy, and help position the Democratic Party for electoral successes at all levels?
- How can the DNC expand programs dedicated to training and retaining a diverse staff, find ways to inject new voices into the national media, and promote diversity in allied institutions and campaigns?

### **The members of the Task Force are:**

- Naomi Aberly, Vice Chair of the DNC’s National Finance Committee
- Donna Brazile, Vice Chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee
- Governor Steve Beshear, Governor of Kentucky
- Maria Cardona, Principal, Dewey Square Group
- Marc Elias, Chair, Perkins Coie Political Law Group
- Teddy Goff, Partner, Precision Strategies
- Maneesh Goyal, President, MKG
- Rick Palacio, Chairman of the Colorado Democratic Party
- Lee Saunders, President, AFSCME
- Eric Schmidt, Chair, Google
- DNC Chair Debbie Wasserman Schultz, Member of Congress (Ex-Officio)

The Task Force met regularly to review research, speak with experts, and discuss areas for improvements as well as solutions. They consulted hundreds of people involved in politics including elected officials, candidates, campaign managers, general consultants, academics, donors, activists, and voters across the country. academics, donors, activists, and voters across the country.

## SUMMARY OF OUTREACH

On behalf of the Task Force, the DNC solicited feedback from supporters, and more than 100,000 people responded. The Chairwoman met with Congressional leaders and caucuses and members of the Task Force met with groups in their respective fields of expertise. The DNC has hosted dozens of listening sessions; conducted more than 200 individual interview;

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**INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS**

**ELECTED OFFICIALS, CANDIDATES, CAMPAIGN MANAGERS, GENERAL CONSULTANTS,  
ACADEMICS, DONORS, ACTIVISTS, THE ASSOCIATION OF STATE DEMOCRATIC CHAIRS,  
AND VOTERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY**

## THE TASK FORCE'S PRELIMINARY RECOMMENDATIONS

In February 2015, the Democratic Victory Task Force recommended five areas where the DNC could make substantial changes to strengthen the overall health and effectiveness of the national Party including the state parties.

1. Develop a **clear, values-based message** that unites us as Democrats, engages and appeals to the American electorate, and that resonates with the core underlying values that have made America great throughout our history.
2. **Create strong, collaborative and accountable partnerships** with each state party to develop a pathway to enhance programs that promote self-sustainability.
3. Proactively **protect and expand every American's right to vote, and ensure every vote is counted.**
4. Build a three-election-cycle strategy for **redistricting** – at the state and federal level.

5. Identify and promote the **next generation of Democratic leaders**, including citizen activists from a cross-section of backgrounds and walks of life focusing on building our bench of future candidates as well as Party and campaign operatives.

Using these preliminary recommendations as a guide, the Task Force was able to continue speaking with Democrats from across the country, enlist the help of outside experts, and commission new research to This report provides several ways for the DNC to build on its current activities to meet the needs of the American voter including finding ways to reach the more than 93 million eligible voters who did not vote in the 2012 presidential race and the more than 140 million who did not vote in the 2014 midterm elections, while supporting efforts to reach and register new voters.

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## MESSAGING

One of the most striking findings of the Task Force's initial conversations was the difficulty faced by candidates, elected officials, activists and others in concisely, consistently answering the question, "What does it mean to be a Democrat?" The beauty of the Democratic Party lies in the very fact that we are not one-size-fits-all. We are enriched by our diversity.

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However, we lack a clear message about what unites and animates us as Democrats. This has contributed to a disjointed style of communicating through long lists of policy statements, which are not well understood or embraced by voters (even though many support the policies and issues we champion). The lack of a cohesive narrative impedes the Party's ability to develop and maintain a lifelong dialogue and partnership with voters. This finding led to the creation of the National Narrative Project.

## NATIONAL NARRATIVE PROJECT

The National Narrative Project is engaging Democrats around the country in conversations about the Party and what it means to them. Interviews, focus groups and surveys with committed Democrats and voters across the political spectrum are exploring the hopes and values that animate Democrats and inspire our fellow Americans. The goal is to lift up the foundational ideas that unify Democrats today—no matter who we are or where we live—and empower people to tell their own stories about what it means to be a Democrat.

This work is being conducted by a diverse working group of experts with experience in Democratic politics at the local state and national levels, as well as expertise in brand strategy, grassroots organizing, digital communications and other fields. The project will create party-building tools and content to empower those who build our Party from the ground up—hardworking Democrats who serve on state, county, city, ward and precinct committees across the country.

Tools and training will be offered to state and local party organizations—including a new, online training tool for crafting effective messages. Learning will be shared with interested candidates and allies. All departments of the DNC, state parties, and campaigns will use the insights and content from this project to drive a more powerful, consistent message and engage the American people in meaningful ways.

## EXPANDED RAPID RESPONSE

Building the bench does not just mean recruiting and training new faces to run for office. We must also recruit and train new voices. The DNC is expanding its rapid response operations and opposition research programs each and every cycle. State parties will continue to be pivotal in recommending surrogates, providing media support, and tracking GOP candidates – at all levels. The DNC Political Department has hired a Deputy Director for Surrogate Operations who will be responsible for maintaining active relationships with surrogates and culling intelligence from our state and local parties so that the Democratic Party’s communications teams can respond at a moment’s notice to support candidates and hold Republicans accountable with the voices that resonate in every state, county and media market, while addressing every issue of importance to voters.

## STATE PARTIES

One key finding is abundantly clear and affects every single recommendation and implementation strategy: State Democratic parties are a critical component to winning elections by promoting new voices, expanding the reach of the national Party and helping recruit new candidates and activists.

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Without more support from the DNC – and the related Party committees – state parties, especially those in states not considered to be presidential battleground states, will continue to have to choose between the election immediately before them and a long-term strategy for success.

As the DNC implements these recommendations, it is the responsibility of the DNC to ensure that all state parties have a baseline of financial support, are professionally staffed, create plans to recruit volunteers, work with allied organizations to register and mobilize new voters, communicate regularly with voters, and neutralize Republican attacks on Democratic values.

We recognize that this may not always be easy, that no two states are alike, and that there is a multitude of factors that go into determining the path to victory for each individual campaign. However, the DNC also recognizes that while there are many places for improvement, it is also the only entity accessible to all Democratic parties and all Democratic candidates that:

- Is the leading source of voter information, targeting data, and staff expertise in technology;
- Houses the largest library of opposition research about Republicans;
- Responds to breaking political news in-the-moment with targeted research and a robust network of surrogates;
- Provides financial support and training to hire the best and brightest staffers in each state; and
- Operates national programs that help protect every American's right to vote.

However, it is only through state Democratic parties that DNC resources can reach candidates and ultimately the American voter. Neither the DNC nor state parties can operate independently of one another. Together – and only working within the bond of a complete and coordinated relationship – the DNC with Democratic state parties can strengthen the Party, recruit more Party activists and volunteers, motivate them to vote, and inspire them to get more involved.

## STATE PARTY PARTNERSHIP

This is why, immediately following the Task Force's preliminary report, the DNC **renegotiated** the Democratic National Committee State Partnership Project (SPP) – a critical and long-term funding source for state parties that is built on the 50 State Strategy. Through the Task Force's State Party Strategic Assessment, seven basic components of a strong state party emerged:

- 1. Infrastructure:** State parties should have full-time, trained staff that includes an Executive Director, Finance Director, Compliance Director, Communications Director, and Data Manager. These are unique individual positions; not meant to be one person covering multiple jobs. The state party must have a budget and finance plan to meet that budget for at least one election cycle. This plan should include identified and long-term self-sustaining revenue streams. Within the confines of each state's law, the state party must be able to create and implement a successful statewide coordinated campaign that attracts Democratic stakeholders and works successfully and collaboratively with our Democratic allies, our national committees, and allied organizations.
- 2. Training & Bench-Building:** The state party must make on-going training for party leaders, activists, and candidates accessible. They must be able to work within a local committee structure and with progressive partners to identify potential candidates for local and state offices and provide them counsel and training opportunities
- 3. GOTV & Election Day Field Operations:** The state party must have an identified precinct organizer/captains system in place using local committee operations where viable and provide them training for every aspect of GOTV – Vote by Mail, Early Vote, and Election Day.
- 4. Constituency Outreach:** Each state party must develop long-term constituency-based outreach – typically through the caucus or club structure – with the intention to establish a coalition table

that is wholly integrated into the state party. They must implement programs to expand base Democratic voters and actively fold recommendations into their GOTV activities.

- 5. Technology:** State parties must stay up-to-date on technology, investing in sophisticated programs that aim to build one comprehensive, web-based data and contact manager; maintain up-to-date compliance software; ensure a user-friendly, interactive website; and keep an up-to-date email management tool.
- 6. Strategic Communications and Media Relations:** State parties must have a research program (including opposition research), an aggressive internal and external press strategy that integrates specialty and constituency media, and a robust social media presence across all mediums.
- 7. Strong Voter Files:** The state parties must be committed partners with the DNC to enhance the national voter file; share lists; swap data; develop pilot programs to continuously collect, test, and update data; and be able to service campaigns that want to effectively use the voter file as a tool to communicate.

These seven components of a strong state party are included in the 2015 State Party Partnership memorandum of understanding that has been signed by 50 state parties. The DNC will continue to supply financial support for key staff positions and projects, but will also provide critical infrastructure, tools, and resources – from Digital, to Data and Technology, from Voter Protection to Research, from Political to Community Engagement to Communications – all with an eye towards more fully integrating the operations of the DNC and the state parties to maximize electoral successes. In exchange, the state parties have agreed to regular updates with their counterparts at the DNC and must submit a written plan for coordination with allies in their states, including local level Democratic leaders who are key to disseminating messaging and providing information upstream on evolving dynamics at the local level.

## STATE-TO-STATE TACTICAL TEAMS

The second phase in this effort to continue strengthening state parties and the bond between them and the DNC is the development of a peer-to-peer training program between state parties, which will be funded by the DNC. In direct consultation with the state parties, the Association of State Democratic Chairs, and the Association of State Democratic Executive Directors, the DNC will begin sending state party Chairs, Executive Directors, and other staff to targeted state parties that are finding it difficult without mentorship and institutional knowledge to reach the seven components of a successful state party. Teams will be developed and, at the direction of the DNC, sent into states that need more than just monetary assistance to strengthen their operations.

## VOTER PROTECTION AND EXPANSION

The Democratic Party must do more to protect the rights of American voters and expand access to the ballot box. We must invest in projects and programs that reflect our belief that voting should be easier and more convenient, not harder, and that every lawful ballot should be counted accurately. The victories achieved by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and his allies fifty years ago are too important to allow our opponents to roll them back now.

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They've pushed voter ID laws – a solution in search of a problem – that disproportionately impact voters that are more likely to vote Democratic.

The Democratic Party tirelessly defends the right to vote. But last year represented a shift towards a more proactive “voter expansion” mission - to ensure that every eligible voter is registered, every registered voter can vote, and that every vote counts.

## **VOTER EXPANSION PROJECT**

Since launching the Voter Expansion Project at the 2014 Winter Meeting, the DNC has worked with our state parties to develop voter expansion programs in all 50 states, including dedicated Voter Expansion staff in more than two-dozen states. The results are tangible: the last cycle, we recruited, trained, and mobilized more than 30,000 attorney volunteers, more than 10,000 poll observers, and more than 3,000 poll workers. The DNC also developed an innovative website to help ensure voters had the information they needed to vote: IWillVote.com.

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IWillVote.com is a comprehensive voter education and registration site designed with a simple theory that voting can be easy and convenient. For all fifty states and the District of Columbia, IWillVote.com has all of the “rules of the road” – like when to vote, what to bring, and how to get registered. It is all in one place and includes registration forms in both English and Spanish. Hundreds of thousands of people used these sites – and the Polling Place Locator – where voters can find out the name and address of their precinct polling location - to obtain voting information and to share it with their networks.

## VOTER TARGETING

The DNC Technology Department has built a state-of-the-art national voter file that can reach more than 31 million voters in 2016. This technological advantage means that even the smallest Democratic campaign now has access to the cutting edge, battle tested tools used by the successful 2008 and 2012 Obama presidential campaigns.

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The DNC has already developed and is actively using software that estimates how many potential new Democrats there are to be registered, how many net votes would be produced by registering new voters, and how difficult it will be to find potential voters in an area. This data helps our state parties and Democratic campaigns to direct canvassing and voter registration drives to target the highest density of unregistered voters, and calculate how much of their resources to commit to influencing an electoral result. These are the types of programs that distinguish the DNC from other campaign committees and allow the organization to be a leader in electoral politics.

## LITIGATION

The DNC is also actively pursuing litigation to protect and expand the right to vote in states and at the federal level.

In 2012, the Democratic National Committee and Ohio Democratic Party asked the courts to declare that every Ohioan should have equal access to early voting in Ohio – and the courts agreed. Every court that heard the arguments, including the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals, held that every Ohioan should have equal access to early voting. As a result of this decision, in 2012 every voter, including military, veterans, and overseas voters alongside all Ohioans, had the same opportunity to vote early through the weekend and Monday before the election.

In 2014, the DNC and ODP asked the federal court for a resolution that would permanently ensure every voter had the same opportunity to vote early through the weekend and Monday before the election. The court granted that request in June 2014.

The Democratic National Committee has also filed a “friend of the court” brief with the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of *Evenwel v. Abbott* to advocate against undermining “one person, one vote.”

We were compelled to act because this case challenges our constitutional principle of “one person, one vote” and forces states to draw state and local districts based on population of eligible voters alone - a position not supported by the text or history of the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution. To our knowledge, all states draw districts based on total population as determined by the Census, while also considering other appropriate factors to ensure they do not deny racial or language minorities participation in the political process or diminish their ability to elect representatives of their choice. Our democratically elected officials represent all citizens, not just eligible voters.

If the challengers get their wish, voting access may be further damaged, and states would be required to exclude children, noncitizen immigrants and other ineligible voters from being counted for purposes of representation – an action that would greatly impact people of color, particularly the fast-growing Latino community, for decades.

This case is a callous attempt by conservatives to redefine the principles of “one person, one vote” for their political benefit. Rather than changing their policies to seek a broader appeal, they are seeking to change the rules and minimize the political strength of others.

Meanwhile, state parties are bringing their own legal actions that support the Democratic Party’s overall mission. In Virginia and Ohio, state Democratic parties are pursuing litigation to make the voting process easier and more accessible. All of these cases, whether at the state or national Party level, demonstrate the Party’s overall commitment to ensuring the right to vote is protected and expanded.

Our Party’s commitment to fulfilling the promise of the Constitution and promoting the right to vote will never waver. That’s why we continue to fight to expand voting access, restore the Voting Rights Act and now to preserve our understanding of “one person, one vote.” This case is an opportunity to prompt a discussion within your community, contrast our values with the Republicans, and ensure that every voice matters on Election Day. The DNC is providing tools to state parties and working with allied organizations to support the briefing.

## REDISTRICTING

Of the 7,383 members of state legislatures across the country, Democrats hold 3,172 seats. Out of the 99 chambers, we hold 30. We must regain seats across the country to secure those seats and retake the 22 state legislative chambers lost in 2010 as we advance towards 2020.

To do this, the DNC is focused on helping state parties, the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee (DLCC) and affiliated organizations to chip away at GOP majorities in key battleground states over the next three election cycles to ensure fair redistricting for Democrats throughout the country.

In conjunction with our state and national allies, the DNC is working to develop legal strategies, passing state and federal legislation, and shaping the coming round of congressional and legislative redistricting.

In unprecedented fashion, a number of organizations including labor, progressive groups, and all Democratic committees are working together to identify key areas where Democrats can win redistricting battles. This includes identifying geographic areas that can be won, formulating legal strategies and launching ballot initiatives – all part of a comprehensive strategy to help Democrats win at local, state and federal levels.

The DNC and other Party committees can help state parties support the messaging, legal, and legislative strategies being developed to target each specific area from now through 2020. This work will also complement the strategies employed by the Democratic Governors Association (DGA) and the DLCC. Under the leadership of former U.S. Representative and state lawmaker Mark Schauer, the DLCC launched

Advantage 2020 to position Democrats across the country for success in the next round of redistricting.

The DGA has launched a new website and fund [Chaired by Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe] dedicated to winning targeted governors races that will impact redistricting in 2020. The ‘2020 Redistricting Fund’ will work in at least 18 states where governors can play an active role in the redistricting process. The DGA estimates that these changes will provide us the opportunity to net Democrats 44 extra U.S. House seats.

Together all of these long-term efforts – both by the family of Democratic campaign committees and allied organizations -- will ensure that Democrats are prepared and ready for the upcoming congressional and state-level redistricting battles, battles which could determine the fates of many of the issues and ideas that are central to America’s success.

## BUILDING THE BENCH

Recruiting Democratic candidates, staff, volunteers, and voters is critical to ensuring the Democratic Party ends its down-ballot electoral drought and builds on the top-of-the ticket success we saw in 2008 and 2012. The Task Force has identified several new programs in which the DNC should invest over the next several years that would help pull new and diverse voices into the Party at all levels.

**Leader 2020 Program.** The Leader 2020 program involves assisting state and local parties and affiliates in recruiting down-ballot candidates. With a goal of thousands of new candidates on the ballot by 2020, this program will put an emphasis on recruiting women and Millennials and increasing the number of candidates from the Hispanic, African American, Asian American, and LGBT communities. Resources provided include staffing, training, fundraising support, and technology and data expertise.

**National Training Network.** Given that there are dozens of organizations that help train candidates and activists, the DNC will build on its existing programs, including research and data trainings for campaign staffs, and strengthen the Hope Institute, a program designed to train young people interested in participating in campaigns and helping them find campaign staff positions. The DNC will make it easy for everyone to find information about the myriad of training programs available. They should also enable people to match their interests with specific organizations and maintain an online platform that helps connect people to the information they want and need. This National Training Network will include online access to training materials, applications, and events. It should also develop into a national database of trained and engaged volunteers and staff looking for opportunities on campaigns.

**Convention Training Academy.** The DNC will host a National Training Academy (NTA) at the 2016 Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia. This NTA would be staffed by the DNC’s family of experts in data, field, message, organizing, GOTV, voter protection, fundraising and other key components of winning campaigns and offer tracks for people at all levels of the political process from volunteers to staff to candidates.

**Democratic Women’s Alliance.** The Democratic Women’s Alliance is built on the foundation that we must mobilize, engage and train Democratic women of all ages across the country. The DNC now has a comprehensive database of every Democratic woman running for office in 2015 and 2016. These women have access to specialized trainings, webinars, networking events and speaking opportunities organized by the DNC. More than 500 women are actively participating in this program as of September 2015.

**New Voices.** The DNC should build on its successful surrogate operation by recruiting more voices from around the country, training them for media appearances and actively booking them on TV, radio and online outlets. The Democratic Party, State Democratic Party and County Democratic Party organizations

have utilized hundreds of surrogates through their party operations. A goal for the DNC is to increase new voices that are representative of the electorate – including African Americans, Hispanics, women, and members of the LGBT community – by 30%.

This work complements the DNC's commitment to diversity that already includes the development of a supplier diversity database of firms owned by women, veterans, LGBT Americans, and people of color. Business owners can register for contract consideration, and the DNC site serves as a resource for candidates, campaigns, and progressive allies to hire vendors of diverse backgrounds. Working with the DNC's top vendors, the Committee is encouraging diverse hiring and contracting practices throughout our supply chain; and the DNC has committed to awarding at least one-third of all the 2016 Democratic National Convention Committee contracts to diverse firms. The DNC will also continue the Hope Institute training and job placement program that has trained more than 100 young leaders, primarily from diverse and underprivileged backgrounds.

## CONCLUSION

The DNC was founded to serve as THE organization promoting Democratic ideals and values at the national level. Over nearly two centuries, it has been a place where all Democrats are welcome to come together, share ideas and work tirelessly to elect Democratic candidates. While the Party has successfully grown and improved its ability to support candidates at all levels of government, recent election cycles make it clear that the DNC must do more to ensure that its success at the national level is reverberating more strongly down the electoral ballot.

In this new millennium, the DNC has worked to secure the election of thousands of Democrats at the state and local level including dozens of governors, hundreds of members of Congress (including the first female Speaker of the House of Representatives) and the election (and reelection) of President Barack Obama. These victories have been significant and have had an important impact on the lives of millions of Americans, and helped our country strengthen economically and in our standing around the world. At the same time, however we have lost almost as many elections as we have won since 2000.

We can build a Democratic Party that is better structured and coordinated so that it can fight for hard-working Americans and expand opportunities for the middle class all across the country, engaging and involving voters and volunteers at an unprecedented level. The DNC's investment in strengthening its operations and the operations of every state party will allow us to meet some ambitious objectives in 2016 and beyond, including:

- Electing the 45th President of the United States
- Electing more Democrats to the U.S. House and U.S. Senate
- Retaking 22 state houses lost in 2010
- Recruiting thousands of new candidates, up and down the ballot
- Recruiting, training, and deploying a new generation of diverse voices across the country to support those candidates
- Engaging volunteers at unprecedented levels and for longer periods during the election cycle
- Increasing the rate of voter participation – including women, Hispanics and millennials who are often underrepresented – to nearly 60% in presidential years
- Ensuring that every American voice is heard and counted during elections.

This report expands on the preliminary recommendations made in February by this Task Force to better contextualize the efforts the DNC is undertaking or will implement to be able to achieve those goals:

### **Developing and Deploying a Clear Values-Based Message**

- Crafting, projecting and deploying a compelling, common narrative about what it means to be a Democrat, while deploying the tools and training to help state parties and local leaders communicate our message. This is and should be a long-term effort to help Democrats embrace and communicate the core values that make our Party unique, and that resonate with voters throughout the country.
- On a parallel track, fine-tuning messaging throughout the election cycle to equip our state parties, allies, and key voices all over the country with the information and messages they need to hold Republicans accountable.

### **Strengthening Collaboration and Accountable Partnerships with State Democratic Parties**

- Partnering with state parties and enabling them to become self-sustaining, powerful engines for change;
- Continuing to invest in growing our data edge over the Republican Party when it comes to voter information and targeting;
- Continuing to invest in building a national social media strategy with an extensive suite of assets, training, and support for state parties;
- Ensuring Democrats in the states have the tools they need to hold Republicans accountable and create a favorable general election environment;
- Activating 1 million volunteers and mobilizing them earlier in the election cycle.

### **Proactively Protecting and Expanding Every American's Right to Vote**

- Developing and promoting state-of-the-art tools to help Americans register to vote; and
- Deploying tools and teams to proactively protect and expand the right to vote, while challenging efforts to curtail voting rights all across the country.

### **Building a Three-Election-Cycle Strategy for Redistricting**

- Engaging state parties and other Democratic committees in long-term planning for redistricting;
- Emphasizing key elections that will affect redistricting, such as those in Ohio and Pennsylvania this year.

### **Identifying and Promoting the Next Generation of Democratic Leaders**

- Recruiting new, diverse voices into the Party at every level; Increasing new voices that are representative of the electorate by 30%;
- Fostering a national network that recruits, trains, employs and promotes volunteers, activists, surrogates, and both current and future campaign staff;

Some of this work is already under way, as detailed in the accompanying Action Plan. For example, in addition to a fundraising effort that enabled the DNC to cancel out its \$24 million debt after the 2012 elections, the Party has also been able to provide support to key 2014 races as well as additional support for races in 2015's off-year elections, which is allowing the Party to test different aspects of these recommendations. In addition, the DNC significantly increased its investments in State Party Partnerships following the preliminary report of this Task Force in February. The Party has also boosted its efforts to expand on the digital data edge that led to electoral success in 2008 and 2012 at the presidential level, now sharing that powerful voter file with our presidential primary candidates, which will feed into our general

election intelligence through the efforts of our strong primary campaigns. The data file is also now being shared with down-ballot candidates, further growing the advantage in targeting that Democrats have had for two cycles. Those are steps in the right direction and consistent with the preliminary and final recommendations of this Task Force.

The Democratic Party must now move to aggressively build on the recommendations and initiatives already underway. We must involve donors, candidates, activists, allies and staff all across the country in the goals and tactics laid out in this report to make sure that our Party has everything it needs to fight for the American people. We are confident that with a commitment by the DNC to strengthening its core functions and continuing its work to train, coordinate, and recruit more voices, volunteers and voters, we will inspire more Americans to join us. Together, we will not only grow the Democratic Party and win elections in 2016 and beyond, but also keep America moving forward.

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