

A PEOPLE'S WAVE PEOPLE'S ACTION 2018 ELECTION REPORT

november 2018



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When you take radical steps to ensure that organizers and activists have the tools and support they need to make a collective vision of a progressive, fair and equal society a reality, you create powerful and immediate change that will resonate for years in local, statewide and national communities.

WELCOME TO OUR PEOPLE'S WAVE

November 6th wasn't just the "blue wave" that marked the end of Trump's single party rule in Washington - it was the "people's wave'; major gains for progressives in statehouses across the country, the expansion of healthcare for more than a million people, even in deep-red states, and the election of an unprecedented number of women, LGBTQ, and people of color. Our people's wave was made possible by years of groundwork and dedication by our member organizations. What we need going forward is more than wave, but a rising of the tide to lift our progressive vision into a strong reality for our country's most vulnerable. To do this, we must continue to invest in grassroots organizing backed by sharp strategy, deep relationships and a bold, unapologetically progressive vision.

People's Action has focused on investing in and building the power of our, state member organizations to create a lasting movement and governing power for the people. This year, each of our state member organizations leaned into the election, many at unprecedented levels. We were active in 9 US Senate Races, 42 US House races, 13 Governor's races, 226 state and local races and 15 ballot initiatives. (see page 4)

Our member organizations are uniquely qualified to do this work: they practice Integrated Voter Engagement cycle over cycle; they have the deep history and deep relationships; and they have been doing the issue organizing necessary to shape the terrain - be it health care, housing, taxes, immigration, climate justice or other issues.

Over the course of the coming weeks, we look forward to sharing with you a deeper look into the lessons and insights we gained through our electoral organizing work, but there is one unifying theme: investment in state-based progressive organizing is creating a base of power that is feeding the next wave of progressive candidates and policy changes that help real people.

WHAT DOES A PEOPLE'S WAVE LOOK LIKE?

We helped flip Congress and elect bold progressives. Of the 9 US Senate races our members targeted, we won 7, including the closely fought Arizona seat where People's Action member **LUCHA** knocked on 140,801 doors. Of the 42 House races we targeted, we won 23, with 3 still too close to call. Many of these are hard-fought races such as: OneAmerica Votes and Washington CAN organized Muslim, Latino, Somali and other voters of color to win a key pick up in WA-08; Citizen Action of New York and Jane Addams Seniors in Action defeated opponents of the ACA in NY-19 and IL-06; New Jersey Citizen Action won NJ-07 with voter outreach 'When Women Vote We Win' powered by over 300 volunteers, many active in NJCA's healthcare work. People's Action wasn't just organizing in swing districts. We helped elect true champions including Ilhan Omar (MN-5) backed by **TakeAction Minnesota**, Jahana Hayes (CT-5) supported by Connecticut Citizen Action Group, Jesus "Chuy" Garcia (IL-4) endorsed by The People's Lobby/Reclaim Chicago and re-elect Rep. Pramila Jayapal (WA-7), founder of OneAmerica.

We took giant step towards meaningful state governing power.

Of the 13 Governor's races where member organizations invested heavily, we won in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Maine, Nevada, New Mexico, Illinois, Michigan, Colorado, Connecticut and Kansas. For both Citizen Action of Wisconsin and Kansas People's Action, this was the culmination of years of work challenging the extremist agendas of Scott Walker and Kris Kobach. Our members Citizen Action of New York, Colorado People's Alliance and Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada Action Fund (PLAN Action) played critical roles in gaining trifecta control in New York, Colorado and Nevada. In Pennsylvania, New Hampshire and Connecticut, we made significant gains in state legislatures with Keystone Progress, Reclaim Philadelphia and 215 People's Alliance, Rights and Democracy NH and Connecticut Citizen Action Group. In North Carolina, Down Home North Carolina won HD-119 in their first electoral program and helped break the Republican supermajority. In total, we won 115 local races from county commissioner to school board (with still more too close to call).

We ran people's candidates with bold progressive ideas.

People's Action supported candidates from our communities who unapologetically fight for racial, economic and gender justice, including many of our own grassroots members. From expanding voting rights in Michigan, Maryland and Nevada to groundbreaking de-escalation training in Washington, to a payday lending rate cap in Colorado, we passed progressive policy at the ballot box. We won 10 of our 15 ballot measures. Our Protest to Power platform and issue campaigns pushed candidates to embrace a vision for our country that works for all of us. From healthcare to free college to confronting the housing crisis to winning climate justice and mass liberation, we changed the conversation, recruited champions to run and set the stage for changes that make a difference in people's lives.



OUR VICTORIES: BY THE NUMBERS



united states house races



united states senate races



governors races

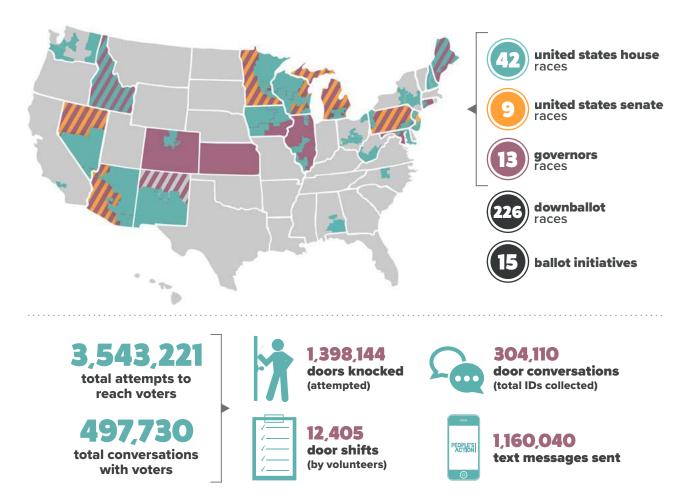


downballot races



ballot initiatives

PROTEST TO POWER CANDIDATE MAP



PEOPLE'S ACTION FAMILY IN OFFICE

Up and down the ballot, activists, board members, and member leaders from our network are winning races and bringing our bold progressive platform into the halls of government. Since we began training community leaders to run for office in 2015, People's Action has offered trainings for community leaders on how - and why - to run for office. In 2018, People's Action and our member organizations have trained more than 230 future candidates, and at least 18 members of the People's Action family were elected.

In Wisconsin, former **Citizen Action of Wisconsin** board member Mandela Barnes made history by becoming Wisconsin's first African American Lieutenant Governor. Just two years ago, Mandela was part of the team brainstorming how to co-govern with

elected officials at People's Action's founding convention. Jeff Smith, an organizer with Citizen Action of Wisconsin and core part of the People's Action rural progressive organizing project, won his race for State Senate in a rural, red district. Citizen Action of Wisconsin uses an innovative co-op organizing model where community members join together and pledge to give monthly, once enough members join to hire an organizer, a co-op is formed. Many co-op members ran for office this year including Marisabel Cabrera, an immigration attorney, who won her race for the State Assembly and Sarah Godlewski, who led the fight to save the State Treasurer's office when the GOP tried to eliminate it and just got elected to hold the office she helped save.

In Minnesota, Angela Conley, a graduate of Take Action Minnesota's Public Leadership Institute beat a 27-year incumbent to become Hennepin County Commissioner. Angela credits the Take Action Minnesota candidate training and the inspiration and support she drew from the Political Healers program, a powerful program focused on developing women of color's leadership and approaching politics using ritual and healing, with pushing her to run: "We say that we want to own our power, claim our power and use it, and we already have that power. But we have to fight so hard, so this group of women of color surround you, and make sure that you understand that you're creating a path for other women of color behind you. There are other women watching you take this leap, and fight this fight; they're looking at you, and saying, "Well, she's doing, it, I can maybe do this too!"

In Washington, OneAmerica and Washington
Community Action Network celebrated the reelection of two members of their family: Seattle
City Councilwoman Lorena Gonzalez, their former
board chair, and Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal
(WA-7), a powerful people's champion in Congress
and OneAmerica's founder. Rep. Jayapal won
re-election with a resounding 84% of the vote
and pledged to continue to champion Lorena
credited her parents and her memories of working
in the orchards of eastern Washington as a child
of eight years old with inspiring her to strive to
build a better world and defend working families in
Seattle.

In Vermont, nurse, community advocate and **Rights** and **Democracy** board chair Mari Cordes won her race for State House (District 4). A registered nurse for more than 30 years, Mari has been an dedicated advocate for single payer healthcare, including risking arrest with other RAD members in DC to protest the GOP's efforts to take healthcare away from millions of Americans by gutting the Affordable Care Act.

In Arizona, Raquel Teran, a close ally of **LUCHA**, was elected to the State House (District 30).
Raquel was a key player in the successful fight to recall former State Senate President Russell Pearce, author of the anti-immigrant SB1070

bill, and defeat former Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio. She's spent the last twelve years organizing and advocating for civil, labor, immigrant, women's rights and healthcare for all and pledges to continue to champion these issues in office. People's Action was proud to endorse Raquel.

In West Virginia, Sammi Brown will be going to the House of Delegates representing Jefferson County. Sammi is a life-long community advocate and a board member of People's Action member organization **West Virginia Citizen Action Group**. As Sammi said, "We deserve dignity. We deserve an economy that works for us all. And we deserve a representative at the negotiating table who won't sell away our dignity to corporate interests in exchange for scraps."



"There are other women watching you take this leap, and fight this fight; they're looking at you, and saying, 'Well, she's doing, it, I can maybe do this too!"

Angela Conley

Hennepin County Commissioner, 4th District In Nevada, three PLANistas (**Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada Action** members) were elected in the 2018 cycle and one race is too close to call. Former PLAN Action board chair Yvanna Cancela was elected to the State Senate (District 10) after being appointed to the seat in December of 2016. Yvanna is the first Latina ever to serve in the Chamber and spent her first term fiercely advocating for drug cost transparency, affordable healthcare and immigrants rights.

Alex Assefa, a PLAN leader and small business owner, was elected to the State Assembly (District 42). Alex has been a strong advocate for an economy that works for all of us and will continue that fight in the State Assembly. Howard Watts III won a close race for State Assembly (District 15) after a career to fighting for policies that preserve the environment, protect consumers, increase access to the ballot box, and ensure dignity for immigrants and LGBTQ people.

In Pennsylvania, **Reclaim Philadelphia** member and first time candidate Elizabeth Fiedler won her race to represent South Philly as a State Representative. A journalist and mom, Elizabeth has spent years lifting up stories of the community and ran on a truly progressive platform. She goes to Harrisburg to fight for policies that impact her community and her family directly.

In Michigan, three women trained in collaboration with **Michigan People's Campaign**, People's Action and the Michigan Sierra Club were elected: Laurie Pohutsky, Mari Mannogian and Padma Kuppa. These candidates come directly from the communities we organize and will carry these experiences into government.

These are just some of the amazing newly elected officials from the People's Action family. Each of these campaigns - and many others who didn't make it over the finish line this cycle - ran grassroots campaigns grounded in a dedication to making a difference for their community and unapologetically putting people over profit. Together, these campaigns are part of changing the political weather, seeding hope in communities that have been forgotten for too long and building new progressive infrastructure for future election cycles.



Yvanna Cancela Nevada State Senate District 10



Elizabeth Fielder Pennsylvania House District 184



Mari Mannogian Michigan House District 40

LESSONS LEARNED

Grassroots Organizing Works...But it Takes Time and Sustained Investment

The big victories of this cycle were made possible by years of organizing and tough past defeats. Colorado **People's Action** has been organizing door to door in Aurora, Colorado since the organization was founded. They constantly organized against the anti-worker, anti-environment and anti-immigrant policies of Rep. Coffman and mounted a near-miss challenge in 2016. Their deep roots in Aurora and the 39,500 doors they knocked in Aurora alone made Jason Crow's victory possible. Kansas People's Action fought against Kris Kobach's hateful and racist policies for eight long years including wave after wave of base-building in black and brown communities, rapid response to raids and a major challenge in 2014 alongside People's Action. There were difficult moments, but all of that work made it possible to elect a Democratic governor in a deep red state that voted for Trump by over 20 points in 2016.

For our member organizations that suffered agonizing defeats in races on November 6th, these two examples

contain a critical lesson: it takes time and sustained investment to build the politicized and energized base you need to win. New Jersey Organizing Project's (NJOP) founding member Joe Mangino lost his bid for mayor of Strafford, but NJOP leaders who were directly impacted by Hurricane Sandy and the GOP attacks on healthcare worked tirelessly to engage their neighbors and push back against the self-styled MAGA Strafford candidate slate. Jess King lost her run for Congress in a deep red district in rural Pennsylvania, but our partners at Lancaster Stands Up put together an incredible grassroots effort. As one voter said "We've lived on the outskirts of Delta for 30 years. And no one has ever knocked on our door until Sunday when a man who was close to 70 knocked. I feel like we're trashy people, but we're not trash. And that person cared that we lived here...We stood in line at 6:50am and voted for [Jess King]." People's Action, Keystone Progress, Reclaim Philadelphia and 215 People's Alliance all came together to support the outstanding grassroots infrastructure built by our friends at Lancaster Stands Up. Lancaster Stands Up is working hard to bring all those newly engaged voters into their base.





People's Action endorsed bold progressive Governor's candidates Ben Jealous in Maryland, Paulette Jordan in Idaho and David Garcia in Arizona lost despite incredible field organizing by **Progressive Maryland**, **United Action for Idaho** and **LUCHA**. These losses hurt, but the conversations we had, new leaders we identified and demands we lifted up will form the basis for stronger statewide organizations in critical states and will be the spark for future victories. People's Action is willing to take a risk for true progressive champions, do the hard work of culture change and relationship building in historically conservative areas and invest in strengthening our member organizations cycle after cycle because we know that this is what it takes to win real change. The 2018 midterms had big victories after years of painstaking work, agonizing near-misses and a number of promising beginnings to build on. We are truly excited to see what we are able to build on in 2020.

Inspire and train bold progressive champions to run

Our network invests in people and their leadership, and it shows. On November 7th, People's Action member organizations are moving into co-governing with the candidates they supported including at least 18 winning candidates who are former staff, board members, member leaders and graduates of our candidate training programs (see our section on People's Action Family in Office for more).

We must multiply our impact: The power of a network

Together, our network has built a unique family of state-based grassroots organizations. Each of our members is a powerful force for change on their own, but together we are able to shift the narrative, bring unsurpassed innovation and strategic power and amplify our voices and vision. Our national staff provided critical support for our member organizations including 1) top level strategic support through writing disciplined strategic electoral campaigns, targeting, and in-depth training, 2) helping execute those plans, including day to day coaching 3) providing technical support, voter analysis, communications & digital support including access to key tools through our friends at The Movement Cooperative (TMC), 4) 21 national staff deployed to state organizations around the country to provide crucial field support from Wisconsin to Arizona and Minnesota to Maine. The power of the People's Action family is that it's not just a central support, its a true web of solidarity.

People's Action member organizations across the country supported sister organizations during the 2018 election cycle. Five organizations sent staff and member leaders to support organizations in tight races across the country including members of Community Voices Heard POWER who canvassed in Maryland, Neighbor to Neighbor Action members in Massachusetts who headed to Maine to support Maine People's Alliance's homecare for all campaign and The People's Lobby members who headed to Wisconsin to support Citizen Action of Wisconsin's key races including Jeff Smith's run for state senate and their successful defeat of Governor Scott Walker.







In addition, People's Action member organizations shared tools including phone scripts, new text program ideas, election day events, translated materials and new ideas to reach, move and motivate our bases.

Channel the energy of elections into creating community

What makes People's Action unique is that our electoral work - win or lose - lives beyond election day. People's Action and our member organizations are constantly experimenting with how to channel and sustain the intense energy of elections into our base. Student Action's stellar electoral work for Katie Porter's campaign (CA-45) was built out in just six weeks. The majority of the team first were canvassed, became volunteers and eventually moved to staff roles. While the race is still too close to call as we write this report, this team is now the UC Irvine chapter of Student Action. Progressive Maryland is systematically engaging every positive ID for Ben Jealous in the aftermath of the election to invite them to become a member and join an issue team. Citizen Action of Wisconsin is using Hustle to contact voters they engaged and turning them into organizing co-op members. ONE People's **Campaign** is re-engaging voters in Chicago around their upcoming mayoral and City Council elections; as well as pulling leaders from downstate Illinois into their work on the state budget.

Volunteers are part of our secret sauce. More than half our shifts were filled by volunteers and several organizations ran successful entirely volunteer programs including **Reclaim Philadelphia**, **Take**

Action Minnesota and Ground Game LA. Others hired directly impacted people to lead their electoral programs. Without these volunteers, our map of victories would simply not have happened. For example, PLAN Action (working with the Win Justice PAC) recruited 1,066 volunteer shifts that helped lead to the election of Jacky Rosen as their new US Senator in Nevada. And unlike traditional paid field programs, these volunteers will become part of a permanent infrastructure that will continue to build power in their states. Across People's Action , member organizations are holding events to celebrate with volunteers and invite them to join us in the next step towards our collective liberation.

It is imperative to attack hate, violence and racism head on

Our organizations don't shy away from fighting for racial justice and challenging candidates who advance hate, violence and structural oppression. Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement Action Fund member Kaleb Van Fosson was removed from an event last week for asking incumbent Representative (and well-documented racist) Steve King (R-lowa) a question about his white supremacist and anti-semitic record—and it went viral. While unfortunately King was re-elected, lowa CCI Action Fund's work has laid the groundwork for change and exposed his vile views. In a particularly divisive election, Take Action Minnesota led the way in beating back racist and Islamophobic attacks against Keith Ellison and led a healing process when allegations of domestic violence became public.

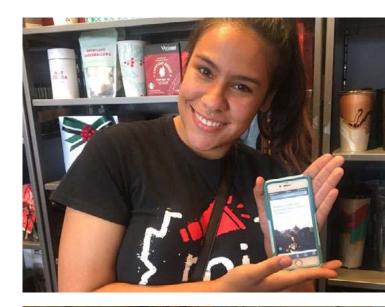
Their leadership helped Minnesotans resist divisive politics and elect an attorney general that will stand up against corporate greed, corrupt politicians and discrimination. **Progressive Maryland** built on work to secure the re-enfranchisment of people convicted of felonies in Maryland and the mass liberation team worked hard to turn out returning citizens. New voters included women bailed out during Progressive Maryland's Mama's Day Bailout. People's Action prioritizes real conversations in our voter contact that center our values; we don't just push for a quick ID. We see elections as a critical moment to intervene and stand against structural oppression.

Structural barriers are real, and we need to be ready

People's Action member organizations and our partners encountered voter suppression and voter intimidation across the country. The GOP and the corporate backed extreme right have invested in wholesale voter suppression and it is changing the outcome of elections. Perhaps the most stark example was a the North Dakota voter ID laws that disenfranchised Native people living on reservations where People's Action partners Four Directions and the Native Organizers Alliance did heroic work. From Prince George's County, Maryland to Las Vegas and Wichita, we fought long lines, faulty machines, not enough ballots and voter intimidation. If progressives are to win governing power at scale, we must start with dismantling the structures that hold us back immediately. This means expanding voting rights just like People's Action organizations did in Nevada, Maryland, Michigan and staying laser focused on redistricting.

We must also address strengthen our organizing because we are up against a flood of corporate money in our elections. For example, in Maryland, Larry Hogan's war chest of corporate donations was able to flood the airways with misleading attack ads. However, even as dark money puts a thumb on the scale, its corrupting influence also motivates people to seek change. In Aliso Canyon, Ground Game LA's canvassers fought nose bleeds and nausea from the gas leak as they reached out to voters.

These same voters were ready to vote out their Representative in large part because of that same gas leak and the outsized influence of the gas company in local politics. We must fight big money in elections and invest in the political education that helps our communities realize their power and understand the right wing corporate agenda they are up against.





We Must Center Stories, Relationships and Real People

Our families are hurting. They face crisis after crisis: family separation, xenophobic attacks, the deadly bungling of the response to Hurricane Maria and the growing climate threat, the consequences of systemic racism and economic injustice in our courts, our schools, our hospitals and the highest office in the land...the list goes on. When communities have been divested from and harmed, it takes time to build back. People's Action member organizations used innovative relational voter programs and drew on their deep roots in their communities to turn out new voters. From art cars with LUCHA in Arizona to souls to the polls marches with PLAN Action in Nevada to zombie canvasses on Halloween with Down Home North Carolina to Take Action Minnesota's #Politics of Joy work in the Governor's race, People's Action used creativity, joy and relationality to bring new people in and connected election work to ongoing issue campaigns that address the real issues people face on a day to day basis. And it worked. This will be the first midterm election with over 100 million voters and many of





Remember in November generated over 12,000 postcards and e-cards that highlighted our various campaigns and values.

those voters were new voters or infrequent voters, exactly the groups People's Action targeted. In fact, data indicates that 10 percent of voters this cycle sat out 2016 and they voted for Democrats by a 3:1 margin. Where People's Action member organizations dug deep, we saw astounding turn out. In Prince George's County Maryland, a major focus of Progressive Maryland's work, there was historic turn out. Several polling places in precincts that Progressive Maryland ran out of ballots and lines were long across the county. Similarly, we saw turn out spike in counties or precincts we focused on in Kansas (Kansas People's Action), Tennessee (Tennessee Citizen Action), California (San Francisco Rising and Ground Game LA) including 100% turnout in one precinct!), New Mexico (through the voter engagement of 501C3 member Southwest Organizing Project), Washington (Washington CAN! and OneAmerica Votes), Arizona (LUCHA) and more. We look forward to digging into the data precinct by precinct to better understand what worked.

In order to turn out new voters and change the face of government, we need to acknowledge the traumas we've faced and take the time to imagine what would heal us. The Political Healers program does just that by bringing cultural trauma into public memory and centering the power and experiences of women of color. This cycle, we launched the Remember in November strategy – an innovative relational voter contact program from our Political Healers Program. Remember in November focused on what's at stake for each of us in this election. It gave voters tools to share their stories with friends and family, to return community and joy to the ritual of voting and it supported women of color as organizers, voters and candidates. We reached nearly 150,000 people with election messages that connected to race, gender and the deep experiences that drive us.

Bold Progressive Issue Organizing Must Go Hand in Hand with Electoral Work

People's Action engages in elections because we want to make a difference in real people's lives. Turning electoral power into structural reforms that shift the balance of power toward working people requires defining the "why" of electoral campaigns around our issues and sharp community-led policy demands that are ready to turn elections into laws. When issue campaigns are inextricably linked to electoral work, each strengthens the other. The more than 1,000 healthcare actions that our healthcare campaign carried out to save health care and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) since December 2016 have kept healthcare as the number one issue for voters and has given our organizations a motivated, engaged base of leaders with powerful stories to bring into election campaigns like defeating Rep. MacArthur in New Jersey, the only member of their congressional delegation to support the repeal of the ACA. New Jersey Citizen Action (which started their campaign in April of this year) and New Jersey Organizing Project credit their strong healthcare campaign with allowing them to mount a robust electoral program in CD-3 and the Senate race with over 100,000 voter contacts and 1,000 volunteers (NJCA scored an additional win in CD-7, also due to the strength of their health care organizing). In NJ-3 specifically, NJCA and NJOP used a complementary strategy where NJCA targeted women voters and NJOP went after independent voters, but both talked about health care consistently. Ground Game LA's environmental justice work with families poisoned by the gas leak in Aliso Canyon gave them a base and the credibility to engage people in this crucial area in Katie Hill's victory in CA-25.

This also means bringing our issues directly to the ballot box through well-organized ballot initiatives. This election, Colorado People's Action won a huge victory against predatory payday lenders with a rate cap ballot initiative. OneAmerica and Washington Community Action Network played a huge role in passing the De-Escalate Washington Initiative to mandate more de-escalation and mental health training for law enforcement and helped anchor the Front and Centered coalition that created 1631, a ground-breaking, if ultimately unsuccessful, climate justice initiative that centers equity. Maine People's Alliance authored and led an initiative fight to win home care for all Mainers and improve working conditions for homecare workers. While the initiative fell short, it exposed the home care crisis, entirely shifted the narrative and created openings for a legislative win in the year to come. In addition, Nevada and Michigan won automatic voter registration and Maryland gained same day voter registration. When the issues that impact real people's lives are present in elections, we can expand the electorate, elect champions and lay the groundwork for future wins.

When issue campaigns are inextricably linked to electoral work, each strengthens the other.

SPOTLIGHT

RURAL PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZING

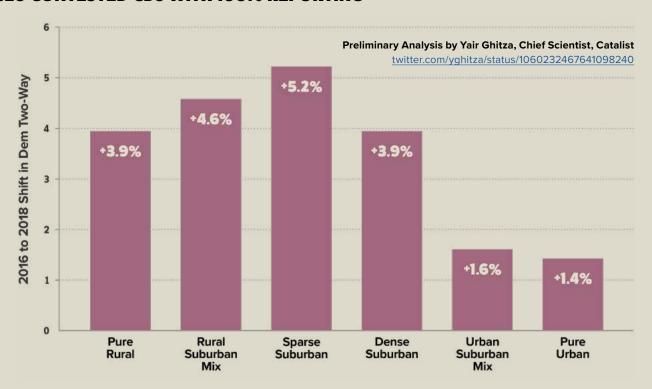
People's Action is dedicated to organizing in rural communities and building connections across geography. Rural communities are struggling with crumbling infrastructure, jobs drying up as corporations abandon them, pollution from factory farms, mining and fracking and the scourge of the opioid crisis. Any broad progressive populist movement must include rural and small town communities and the results of the 2018 elections proved this strategy's potential. Contrary to the dominant media narrative, a first look at the data shows that whether by county or Congressional district, for House, Senate or Gubernatorial races, Republican candidates did significantly worse than Trump in 2016 in the rural areas that are supposed to be the heart of their base.

We saw rural progressive populist candidates win up and down the ballot across the country. Jeff Smith, an organizer with **Citizen Action of Wisconsin** and one of the core leaders of People's Action's rural organizing project, won a key State Senate race in an Obama-Trump district in rural western Wisconsin. **Michigan People's Campaign** leader Laurie Pohutsky helped to

flip a House seat (District 19) in a suburban and smalltown district from Republican to Democratic control for the first time in decades.

"The thinking behind a lot of the Democratic Party's campaigning is that they have to run to the middle, and they have to sound conservative to get those votes - I am going to prove them wrong," Jeff Smith said in the weeks leading up to the election. "We're going to have a progressive, liberal Democrat representing western Wisconsin, in a very rural district, because I talk to people. I'm out there out in the open with my truck with a big sign that says, "Stop and Talk to Me!" People are welcome, and that's all they really want – someone they can talk to, who listens to them, and responds to them." Our member organizations like Down Home North Carolina started by having intentional conversations on the doors last year to really engage in rural communities, and built on that work to knock on 23,000 doors and mobilized over 100 volunteers and canvassers and played a key role in breaking the Republican supermajorities in both chambers.

CD RESULTS BY CITYLAB CLUSTERS 320 CONTESTED CDs WITH 100% REPORTING





LEFT: Jess King ran for U.S. Congress in PA's 11th District. **BELOW:** Down Home North Carolina leaders working in Alamance County.



"The bottom line is that as voters, as a citizens in this country and as human beings, we do deserve better," says Jesse Davis from **Down Home North Carolina**. "I do not deserve to have to Work two jobs to be able to provide money to help my family out with their prescription medicines. Don't forget that we're human beings, not just votes. It's about rolling your sleeves up, and doing the work – and that's what Down Home North Carolina is doing, and I find that amazing."

Keystone Progress followed the leadership of their affiliate Lancaster Stands Up! to back Jess King in Pennsylvania's 11th Congressional District. Although King lost she made up more than 12 points in one of the safest Republican districts in the country and that ferocious organizing offers a clear roadmap for how transform the political landscape. Lancaster Stands Up canvassed in places that had never been door knocked before and engaged in brave and curious conversations. Similarly, Hometown Action in Alabama, Rights and Democracy in New Hampshire and Vermont, United Action of Idaho and West Virginia Citizen Action Group led with relationships

in launching their work in rural communities and focusing on the issues that impacted their neighbors. We also saw the danger of failing to connect, listen and respond to rural issues and build a real agenda that speaks to rural communities this cycle. In lowa, Fred Hubbell lost by 39,529 votes in an election where the Democrats won the Congressional races by 49,159 statewide. If Hubbell had supported a moratorium on factory farms; getting profits out of the healthcare system; and declaring clean water a birthright for all lowans—the agenda promoted by lowa Citizens for Community Improvement Action Fund—he could have easily closed the gap in rural lowa and won the Governor's race.

As K.C. Vick of Hometown Action (Alabama) explained in a profile in The Nation, "We're not partisan, but we have really strong values—so we just want to follow common sense, and do things that are good for communities and for working people and for our environment." To win in rural areas and small towns, we need deep listening, real understanding of the local context and strong values-based message.

SPOTLIGHT

HEALTH CARE IN THE ELECTION

For decades, People's Action has been a leader in organizing and advocacy around health care, both through our member organizations' state-based legislative work and through our nationally coordinated efforts to protect and expand Medicaid and Medicare, and advance health care for all.

Immediately after the 2016 election, we knew healthcare was at risk for millions of Americans. We drew on our long history of healthcare organizing to protect health care against the odds. From Day One of the Trump Administration, we saw this campaign as one that must move in tandem from an advocacy and electoral perspective...and culminate in the all-important November 2018 midterm elections. By all measures we succeeded: we stopped the legislative repeal of the ACA against the odds, defined healthcare as the number one issue in voters' minds,

and defeated a number of the politicians who put profits before people's right to healthcare.

Our work, in coordination with our partners at Health Care for America Now (HCAN), was a well-conceived, well-executed campaign that delayed the GOP drive to repeal and divided Republicans. Throughout 2017, member groups mobilized tens of thousands of grassroots leaders in Republican districts and states where the member of Congress was electorally vulnerable and/or could be moved to oppose repeal. Local activists organized hundreds of actions across the country, bird-dogged MOCs, spoke up in town halls and in the newspapers, and devoted countless hours to protecting our health care. When their representatives refused to speak with them, leaders held town halls without them or represented them with an empty chair or even a live chicken in Michigan.



This continuous local organizing in key districts set the table for the sweep that we saw in the US House. We focused our US House program on 18 races, all of which were races where there was a Republican incumbent (or open seat that had been held by a Republican), and where the member organization had done deep organizing around healthcare since 2016. In the end, we saw incredible gains - with 12 of those 18 races won (and one race too close to call). Here are a few examples:

Tom MacArthur (NJ-3) was an architect of the repeal of Obamacare. He helped broker a compromise to help ultimately pass repeal out of the House, after leadership had failed to garner enough votes in previous attempts. While the bill failed in the Senate, member groups like New Jersey Organizing Project and New Jersey Citizen Action spent months holding MacArthur accountable at town-halls and election stops, and educating voters about his position and the role he played in trying to take away their health care. During the election, these same leaders told their stories on the doors.

The repeal of the Affordable Care Act was central to Republican Congressman John Faso's defeat in the 19th Congressional District of New York. His opposition to the ACA galvanized resistance by member groups like **Citizen Action of New York**, kicking off "Faso Fridays" with constituents protesting outside his district office each Friday. Democratic contender Antonio Delgado made healthcare a defining issue and won.

Jane Addams Seniors in Action took on sitting GOP Congressman Peter Roskam of Illinois' 6th Congressional District. Roskam is part of House GOP leadership and is an ideologue who has long favored privatizing Social Security and gutting Medicare. This nationally-unique group of seniors recruited 308 volunteer shifts to phone-bank, doorknock and deliver hundreds of hand-written postcards to fellow senior voters in the District, and handed defeat to Roskam.

Health care was not only a defining issue in Congressional races, but also in Governor's races. After years of undermining public health care programs and putting profits before people, Scott Walker lost his seat in Wisconsin. Marquette Law School's final poll heading into the election ranked healthcare as the number one issue for Wisconsin voters. Citizen Action of Wisconsin was at the forefront of this fight, and even worked with his opponent, Tony Evers, to ensure that he was a champion of "BadgerCare for All" on the campaign trail.

Local activists organized hundreds of actions across the country, bird-dogged MOCs, spoke up in town halls and in the newspapers, and devoted countless hours to protecting our health care.



Remember in November

Remember in November brought our Political Healers program into the 2018 elections. Political Healers is a powerful program created by the Women of Color table at **Take Action Minnesota** to invest in the leadership of women of color that People's Action is spreading nationwide. Janae' Sumter, Queerocracy Organizer with **VOCAL-NY Action** describes the political healers as "they are the light that continues to push with love, strength and compassion as one in this movement. It's time to bring cultural trauma, gender oppression, racism into the public memory. The healing must start somewhere and it starts here."

Remember in November centers on the voices, votes and power of women of color and queer, trans and gender non-binary people of color. These are the same voters we needed to turn out in this election in order to win. It began with a pre-election GOTV strategy that focused on remembering the damage and cultural trauma oppressive policies have created - and turning that memory into action. It continued with community protector actions around election day to connect to the sacred ritual of voting and infuse the experience of voting with power, community and joy.

Grounding people in their experience and what's at stake can break the cycle of shaming, disempowerment and structural barriers that keep many people from voting.

As Mary Spaulding, political healer with TakeAction

Minnesota explained, "When people are doubtful of whether they should vote, I ask them: Who is one person

in your life that deserves a better future than what we have right now? Go vote for that person. Go vote for your younger self. Go vote for people who you know can't vote, and want to vote." Remember in November made the stakes clear for our community and brought new people into the conversation and the voting booths.

In the 2018 cycle, Remember in November consisted of three main activities: using postcards, video and digital tools to tell our stories about what's at stake in this election, a mass canvass reaching women of color voters and supporting women of color candidates, and community-centered GOTV events. We created a Remember in November websites including digital actions, a GOTV toolkit and opportunities to connect with our member organizations.

- Remember in November generated over 12,000
 postcards and e-cards, over 1600 pledges to vote, and
 created over 50 videos of people sharing their stories
 about voting.
- 11 states participated in the Political Healers mass canvass with making 32,513 attempts and having more than 5,000 conversations with voters, mostly on the weekend of October 26th.
- Creative, heart-filled and community centered events happened in 6 states including marches to the polls, costumed canvasses on Halloween, remembrance circles before voting and post-election celebrations.



If cultural trauma was being erased from public memory, then it was the role of Political Healers to revive those ghosts and have them haunt the public in strategic political ways.

Arique AguilarFounding mother of the Political Healers program

WHAT IS A POLITICAL HEALER?

The Political Healers program is a leadership development strategy, a powerful analysis and new way of building campaigns that comes out of the work of the Womxn of Color table at Take Action Minnesota. We define a political healer as someone who uses ritual to force cultural trauma into public memory. We are the upfront AND the behind-thescenes people who anchor our work in the grassroots values of our communities, our tribes and our kinfolk. We are the voices who cry out in anger and horror at the travesties bestowed upon our people; we are the caregivers, the nurtures, the healers, the providers, the inspiration, the song, the laughter, the joy, and the ferocity of our work. Political Healers use ritual to change the conversation and reach people in a new way - beyond politics and tactics. We can be spotted by our characteristic purple stoles.

We assert that a person doesn't become a political healer; a person uncovers the political healer within themselves. They do this by acknowledging and valuing the emotional labor they invest in their work as a valid and necessary leadership style within our movement. The political healers program is centered on womxn of color, but a political healer is NOT only womxn of color. We believe that anyone can uncover the political healer within themselves. We do, however, also believe that womxn of color have, because of structural oppression, been forced to utilize their inherent political healer to navigate a world that is organized against their survival. To fully realize and center this role within our movement, we must start by centering those who already embody it womxn of color.

OUR CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT PROCESS

We are forging a new path in our electoral work — one that centers movement politics over traditional politics, and puts people, not career politicians, in power. That means we endorse candidates who are selected by our member organizations, who share our values and commit to taking bold progressive stances. We have engaged thousands of our members in the co-creation of our 40-year Agenda to a People's Economy and Rise Up! Protest to Power Platform and built candidate training programs across the country to ensure more of our members have the opportunity to run for office.

For us, an endorsement isn't the prize, it is just the first step in a long relationship. We expect all the candidates we endorse to co-govern with our grassroots member leaders. People's Action members know that the work doesn't end on election day; we work just as hard to hold elected officials accountable after the election. If we're endorsing a candidate, it's because our members are excited to organize and hit the doors. We endorse when there's a race we are excited about.

People's Action only endorses candidates supported by our grassroots member organizations in places where we have a membership base. We believe in leading from the ground up and building power with our members. We pride ourselves in engaging deeply with local leaders in our endorsement process because they know what their community needs and they understand the candidate's histories in their community. Also, we don't just want to win races; we want to make a real difference in people's lives. We know that any lasting change requires organized and engaged people to hold elected officials accountable to pass and implement the policies we need and we can't do that work without members on the ground.

People's Action member organizations from Portland, Maine to Los Angeles, California, from the Pacific Northwest to the deep South, created spaces for candidates to engage with grassroots leaders, sign onto our platform and win the endorsement of our member-leaders.

Before we endorse anyone, our member leaders interview the candidate, explore their platform and think about these key questions:

- Will they commit to advance our platform? Do they share our values and have they spent their lives fighting for them?
- 2. Do they have a plan to win through a movement politics campaign that puts people over rich donors and for-profit consultants?
- 3. Will they co-govern with us when they win, to advance our shared agenda together?
- 4. Does this candidate reflect the people who they're seeking to represent? (poor and working-class candidates, especially women, people of color, and LGBTQ people)
- 5. Are we, the members of People's Action organizations, excited about investing our time and money to help this candidate win?



FROM PROTEST TO POWER: 2018 PLATFORM

Greedy corporations and the wealthy few have used hatred, fear and trickery to rig the system and keep us divided for too long. From family farms to big cities, from coast to coast, we're fighting for community over greed, justice over racism, and people and planet over big corporations. In this time of crisis, we rise up, joining in protest and in power, in tough times and in victory. We rise up for a government that protects the right of all people to thrive. For a society where every person has a say in our collective future. We refuse to let hatred and fear divide us. **We rise together.**We build people power together. We will win together. We rise up as People's Action for all.

RACIAL JUSTICE

We rise up against the racism embedded in every facet of our society. We know we cannot address the real and deadly damage racism does without facing how genocide, slavery and xenophobia shaped our country and keep us divided. We work to dismantle and remake the institutions that reinforce white supremacy. We fight for targeted bold solutions that invest in healing and rebuilding, including housing justice, good jobs, community-owned clean energy and clean water, restorative justice instead of criminalization, state violence and mass incarceration, sovereignty and dignity for Native peoples and quality education for all.

GENDER JUSTICE

We rise up to tear down barriers based on gender, sexual orientation and gender identity across all aspects of our social anda political life. From missing and murdered indigenous women to violence against trans people, we stand against corrosive and toxic gendered violence. We work for bold solutions to dismantle gender-based oppression including guaranteed access to health care, equal access to economic success, strengthening and expanding civil rights and the justice system and an end to gendered violence and harassment.



TRUE DEMOCRACY

We rise up to demand democracy that truly represents the people. Too often, our voices have been denied, suppressed and silenced. Governing power belongs in the hands of all the people at every level. We fight to enshrine voting rights and protections in law and in reality, reform our broken campaign finance laws and win fair redistricting. Together, we will make real the unfulfilled promise of our democracy.

PEOPLE, NOT PROFIT

We rise up against an economy rigged to serve corporations and the wealthy few. We pledge to end historic wealth inequality and to build an economy where all people can thrive. We fight for a fair global system that puts an end to corporate abuse of global markets and workers around the world. We build cooperative solutions and defend workers' rights. And we fight for a financial system that places people's needs above profit and speculation.

FROM PROTEST TO POWER: 2018 PLATFORM



HEALTH CARE IS A HUMAN RIGHT

Health care is human right that must be guaranteed by our government. We rise up for health care that serves our health and community wellbeing, not the profits of drug corporations, insurance companies or Wall Street. And we demand a health care system that guarantees high quality medical, dental, and mental health care for all; at the time we need it, regardless of where we live or who we are. Profits have no place in health care.



MASS LIBERATION & REBUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES

We rise up for mass liberation, not mass incarceration, criminalization, state violence, biased policing and unjust courts. We demand an end to the criminalization of poverty, mental illness, addiction and homelessness. Together we will build truly safe communities with restorative justice, harm reduction, treatment and real investments in the communities targeted by mass incarceration and systemic racism.



TRUE CLIMATE JUSTICE

We must heal the toxic damage done to low-income communities and communities of color, including on Native lands. We rise up for clean water, healthy land, an end to extraction and real response to the climate crisis. We know that those most harmed by corporate pollution, disinvestment, colonization, structural racism and the climate crisis must be at the center of the solutions. And together we will create good union jobs and build a publically owned clean energy economy that puts people and planet first.



HOUSING JUSTICE

Housing is a human right, fundamental to human dignity. We rise up for affordable, safe, sustainable housing for every person, no matter where they live or who they are. We insist that all communities--not just the wealthy few-- should have access to quality housing near good schools, jobs and culture. We need housing for the homeless, dramatically expanded public housing, more cooperative ownership and housing for people, not bank profits. We rise up for reparations for the communities bankrupted by Wall Street speculation and shut out from generational wealth by decades of racist, government sanctioned policy.



DIGNITY IN WORK

We rise up for access to good jobs for all, with living wages, benefits and pay equity so every person can care for themselves and their families and have a secure retirement. We demand that technology improves our lives, instead of forcing us into unstable work or unemployment. We recognize the value of all work, both in and out of the home, and demand that all jobs are safe, respected and fairly paid. We rise up for the freedom of working people to organize in unions and cooperatives and build better lives for themselves.



RESPECT & SOVEREIGNTY FOR INDIGENOUS NATIONS

We honor the wisdom and resilience of Native Tribes and peoples and their critical leadership in our collective movement. We demand that all levels of government honor treaty obligations and respect tribal sovereignty. We will not forget the painful realities of colonization and genocide and the ongoing impact of structural racism. We stand alongside indigenous people for full realization of tribal sovereignty. From environmental justice to health to economic development to state violence to voting rights, we demand that Tribal Nations and indigenous communities get the resources, investment and legal rights to ensure the protection of their treaty, legal and inherent rights to protect their land and resources, culture and sacred sites for the health and wellbeing of all.



FROM PROTEST TO POWER: 2018 PLATFORM



😋 EDUCATION EQUITY

We rise up for free, high-quality public education from preschool through university. We demand that in every community there are strong neighborhood public schools that meet the needs, interests, and abilities of every child – girls; rural, urban, and poor students; LGBTQ students, differently abled students, immigrant students and students of color. We believe in education that reflects our true history and prepares students to lead. We will end the criminalization of our children, fight to keep them safe in schools and push back every effort to privatize public education. We demand free college for all and an end to the crushing burden of student debt.

🙀 A JUST IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

We rise up for a country that welcomes all, including a pathway to citizenship for Dreamers, their parents, TPS recipients and a safe haven for refugees and asylees. We must end the policies that rip families apart, militarize our borders, exploit the labor of workers for corporate profits and shut people out because of their race or religion. We will fight for a just immigration system that affords a full place in our society, our economy, and our democracy for everyone.

WHO IS PEOPLE'S ACTION?

People's Action is a progressive, multiracial, working-class network of more than a million people and 48 member organizations in 30 states. From family farms to big cities, from coast to coast, we're fighting for community over greed, justice over racism, and people and planet over big corporations. People's Action and People's Action Institute were founded in 2016 to ignite a movement of millions that captures the rising demand for change in our society. Formed from the merger of powerful national organizations with decades long experience with community organizing and passing groundbreaking progressive policy, we come from a storied history of innovation, success and working for bold, people-powered change.

The mission of People's Action Institute is to advance a long-term agenda for racial, economic and gender justice by investing in powerful state and local organizations and campaigns that win real change in people's lives.

We believe that power comes from organizing and action, and therefore we invest in scalable base-building and leadership development, digital organizing, direct action, nonpartisan civic engagement, independent grassroots fundraising and issue campaigns that move people on their values and self-interest. Our agenda isn't a list of policies the establishment says we can win. It reflects what communities across the country must win. Knowing change starts close to home, we're building powerful organizations nationwide where people of all races, faiths, and genders gather to make change. We're developing local leaders who can power our campaigns and policy makers at all levels of government, and advance a national agenda worth fighting for.

PEOPLE'S ACTION