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A Message from our Regional Political Directors

To Our States Project Community,

We all know that state legislative races are severely underfunded and overlooked — by political observers and professionals alike. We cannot overstate how essential you have been to our success this cycle. Without you, our work to build power in the most critical chambers across the country would be impossible.

Because you were there, building your own communities and supporting The States Project’s work, we could leverage our combined decades of experience running state legislative campaigns to research and implement evidence-based electoral programs alongside our partners in the states. By seeding our earliest investments and providing the most valuable types of dollars in key states, you were the engine that helped create new governing power in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Minnesota; and the buffer that helped us hold ground in Arizona, Maine, Nevada, Nebraska, North Carolina, and New Hampshire.

When you powered evidence-based tactics like doorknocking, innovations like testing to run the most potent TV ads, and local media support for candidates who otherwise wouldn’t have had it — you powered opportunities for our candidates to make meaningful connections with their voters. And to win.

We were successful this year because you were with us, early and for cycles before this one, building your own communities, filling late gaps and helping us treat states like the most important parts of our democracy — because they are. Your organizing, dollars, time, and communities made us uniquely ready to have an unparalleled impact in the most critical state elections in generations.

We wouldn’t be here without you, and we’re so grateful for all you do.

Sincerely,

Emily Waggoner, Justin Perez, Maryli Secrest
Regional Political Directors, The States Project
Highlights from TSP in the News

2022 was an unprecedented year for getting our message about why states matter out to the public. Here’s a snapshot of that message in the media.

The New York Times
Democratic-Allied Group Pours $60 Million Into State Legislative Races

“The alarm bells are ringing in our state legislatures. With the rise of the Tea Party and the balance of power dramatically shifting toward the right, the rest of us have been asleep at the wheel for too long at the state level. And now, this threat is truly off the charts.”

—ADAM PRITZKER
Founding Partner

READ THE ARTICLE

The Washington Post
Democrats surged to flip state legislatures, defying past GOP gains

“A couple of legislative races won by a few votes means the difference between some of the most draconian abortion laws passing, restrictions on elections, stopping a gutting of a state’s ability to protect people from polluters.”

—DANIEL SQUADRON
Founding Partner

READ THE ARTICLE

Want to Win? Start With the States

“The States Project Giving Circles bring everyday people together to focus on state legislatures. They gather their friends, family, neighbors, and colleagues, choose a target state to support, and work together to raise a meaningful total that can help shift or defend the balance of power in their selected state.”

—MELISSA WALKER
Head of Giving Circles

LISTEN TO THE EPISODE
“Money means access to the rooms and to the people who shape the nation's laws. It's not enough to just know about the room or the people; we have to show up. And it's not just enough to have one seat. We have to bring our own table — one that we build and carry together. If we unite in our communities and pool our dollars, we will have more representation in those rooms, and have a much bigger say than any one of us could alone.”

—TIA HOWARD
Senior Manager of Recruitment, Giving Circles

“For too long state legislatures have seemed like the minor leagues. We are in a moment when state legislatures couldn't be more important. Because of the Democratic victories in state legislatures, abortion access was expanded in a lifesaving way last night.”

—SIMONE LEIRO
Chief Communications Officer

“Democrats can, in fact, win at the state legislative level. When we invest our dollars appropriately. When we utilize evidence-based tactics, and when we have candidates who can meet voters where they are, we proved that this year. State legislative politics is not the minor leagues.”

—ADAM PRITZKER
Founding Partner
Changing
Who is at the Table

When we work to shift power in a state chamber, we’re not just shifting the party majority — we’re changing who is at the decision table. State lawmakers who are more representative of the diversity of their state gaining governing power to set the agenda? That’s real change.

Here’s a look at how power has shifted in the four chambers where we helped to build majorities in the 2022 Midterms.

Across all of The States Project’s states, there are now 7 women on track to be leaders in their legislative chambers:

Also historic? Two Black state lawmakers are on track to lead chambers where we helped build or hold power:

Rachel Talbot Ross
Maine’s first Black woman
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Joe Tate, who will serve as Michigan’s first Black Speaker of the House of Representatives.
Our Impact in Arizona

"The fall of Roe lit a spark in me that refused to subside. And when I heard about The States Project on actress Busy Philipps’ podcast, I knew that I’d found the perfect way to turn my passion into action in time for the 2022 midterm elections."

—CASEY
Giving Circle Leader, Casey’s Giving Circle for Arizona

ARIZONA GIVING CIRCLES
A & L’s States Project Giving Circle • A Matter of States Giving Circle • Act Now...Our Democracy Depends on it Action Beats Inaction • Altered States Giving Circle • American Tribe’s Flip the AZ State House Campaign Arizona Pathfinders • AZ Blue Team • AZ LD-2 Leftists • Big Red’s Blue Angels • Blair Holt’s Giving Circle • Blue Arizona • Blue Rising • Bluebirds • Bluegrass Blue Wave • Bright Future • Burnt Toast Giving Circle • Busy’s Giving Circle • Casey’s Giving Circle for Arizona • Chop Wood, Carry Arizona • Coast to Coast Giving Circle • Delta 50 Democracy Groupies • Democracy? — TBD • Desert Blooms • Determined Desert Dwellers • Emily’s Giving Circle FAB — Flip Arizona Blue! • Fight for Democracy • Flip ’em Blue Giving Circle • GingerKids • In Pursuit of Clean Countertops Giving Circle • Katy’s Giving Circle • Kelly + Jodi’s Giving Circle • Kitchen Table Democracy Local Level Donors • Los Angeles Giving Circle • Markers For Democracy • Northridge Indivisible • Path to Save Democracy • Puppies for Democracy AZ • Raising Arizona [Mara] • Raising Arizona [Alicia] • ReSisters Giving Circle • SLWV Arizona Strong • Sonoran Desert • State Legislatures Matter • States Focus Giving Circle • Swing These States • Tamar’s Giving Circle • The Real Patriots • The Riveters • Tikun Olam Giving Circle • Tri-Cities ChangeMakers • Turn Arizona Blue • Turn States Blue: Join Dedicated Women! • We Can Do Something! • We Dissent

KEY PARTNERSHIPS
National Democratic Redistricting Committee • Vote Save America
The Story in Arizona

We’ve given democracy a fighting chance in Arizona. The one-seat margins we helped to hold in each chamber are the narrowest majorities the rightwing has held in decades in the state legislature.

Keeping it close matters because it sets us up for the next cycle — wins are built on narrowest majorities the rightwing has held in decades in the state legislature.

While the majorities elected this past November will be in office when presidential elections are held, ground.

The Path to Power

In Arizona, where nearly 90 percent of rightwing state legislative candidates were election deniers, we were the top contributor — spending almost 30 times more than the next largest giver. Every penny of that support made the difference in keeping the power margins close enough to give democracy a fighting chance, although few groups thought investing in Arizona was worth the focus.

In the House, Keith Seaman was elected to serve LD-16; Lorena Austin and Seth Blattman both now serve LD-9. The rightwing had previously held these two districts. These gains were offset, however, by two losses. Just 941 votes changing would have shifted control of the chamber.

There were three wins in critical toss-up seats in the Senate: Dr. Eva Diaz in LD-22, Eva Burch in LD-9, and incumbent Senator Christine Marsh, who had been redistricted into LD-4. The margin in the chamber remained unchanged as the rightwing also picked up seats. Just 1,480 votes changing would have shifted control of the chamber.

The Game Plan

Giving Circles helped fuel The States Project’s full toolkit of evidence-based tactics across the most competitive Arizona districts. That meant layered voter contact including local media support, TV and digital advertising with fully tested messages, and mail.

Tested Messaging on Broadcast TV: With our support ensuring that every TV ad was tested before it aired in Arizona — a best practice never employed before this year in state legislative races — we helped get the most effective messages out to voters. In the past, our in-state partners ran ads on cable instead of broadcast TV, limiting the opportunities for the ads to be seen by a broad audience.

Local Media Support: Ten candidates received TSP-fueled support with local press outreach to get their stories out to voters. Eight of these candidates won their elections.

One story that resonated in the state — where 1 in 3 classrooms do not have a full-time teacher — was that several incredible educators stepped up to run for state legislative seats. This article tells the story of what it means to be a teacher running for the legislature to create a bright future for Arizona students:

Phoenix New Times: Educators Quitting Classrooms and Running for Arizona Legislature in Record Numbers

“A given where our state finds itself — with a series of incredibly draconian abortion bans and restrictions all enshrined into law — my top priority is to protect access to women’s healthcare choices. We must repeal our territorial-era near-total abortion ban, add rape and incest exceptions to our current 16-week ban and give trusted doctors the latitude they need when short- and long-term prognoses make pregnancy dangerous for women.”

— SEnator Christine Marsh, Re-elected to Serve Senate District 4

Both Republicans and Democrats would need to run write-in campaigns for this seat.

The States Project mobilized Giving Circles and our Give Smart program around Dr. Eva Diaz, an educator, and first-time candidate.

Dr. Diaz needed to ensure that voters understood that she would not be on the ballot and that if they wished to vote for her, they had to write in her name. She ran against an election-denying opponent who sought to confuse voters by not publicly stating his party affiliation.

Our Give Smart Program — where members of The States Project community give directly to candidates — was the top funder for Dr. Diaz in a seat that the rightwing could have easily have stolen without our support.

“I am honored and humbled to have been chosen by the voters of Arizona Legislative District 22 to represent you as your next Senator.

“Due to the nature of the write-in process in conjunction with a campaign that started seven weeks before the election, and most importantly, the threat of losing our Blue seat, it was a hard-fought race.

“We couldn’t have done it without the donors, small and large. You made it possible for our team to use every tool possible to help make this campaign a success.”

— DR. EVA DIAZ, ELECTED TO SERVE SENATE DISTRICT 22

“A pivotal moment in our Arizona campaign

In August, Representative Diego Espinoza was running uncontested in LD-22 for the Senate, having secured the Democratic nomination to serve a district he’d represented since 2014. By September, he had abandoned the race to take on a lobbying job.

Because of the timing and state election laws, his name was still on the ballot, but votes cast for him would not be counted.

“By funding full campaigns in key races, we forced the rightwing to compete with us down-ballot and made them play defense in districts that were critical for them to maintain their majorities. Every dollar spent on television, for instance, forced them to invest more heavily in those races too.”

— JUSTIN PEREZ, REGIONAL POLITICAL DIRECTOR THE STATES PROJECT

GIVING CIRCLES: STORIES OF IMPACT 2022

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By the Numbers

Our Work in Arizona

2018
TSP-supported candidates won 4 new seats in the House to create the closest balance of power in Phoenix since 1966.

2020
TSP candidates netted 1 additional seat in the Senate, but the balance of power in both chambers remained the same.

2022
We held our ground. Maintaining the 1-seat margin in each chamber means that a coalition to protect the will of the voters is within reach — democracy has a fighting chance.

What Our Dollars Fueled

- Candidate Contributions 2%
- Digital 7%
- Field Organizing 5%
- Local Media Support 2%
- Mail 3%
- Other Caucus Programming 2%
- Staffing Program 5%
- Television 74%

Candidate Contributions: Contributions directly to candidates’ campaigns
Digital: Primarily non-skippable pre-roll advertising
Field Organizing: Field staff and operations
Local Media Support: Media specialists who work directly with in-state partners on placing stories — op-eds, interviews, news articles — in local press
Mail: Mail pieces in districts with gaps in the final weeks of their mail program to ensure late-deciding voters in key races were seeing critical final messages in their mailboxes
Other Caucus Programming: In-state partner support
Staffing Program: Skilled campaign staff to work across key districts
Television: Audience-tested ads on broadcast TV

Giving Circle Spotlight

“I’ve honestly never been a political person but the stakes have changed too much to continue to stand on the sidelines, especially with everything on the line here in AZ. I reached out via email and Instagram to my friends and family about my desire to get in the fight. A few women in my network immediately jumped on board to offer additional leadership support.

“It felt amazing to know we were all doing what we could with our energy and our dollars to be the change we wanted to see where we live. It’s more important than ever to be an active agent of change in a state that matters so very much to the national political landscape right now. The States Project is helping us make that change happen.”

—DANI
Giving Circle Leader, Desert Blooms
“As a lifelong advocate for human rights, civil liberties, personal freedoms, and justice for all, success means that I will continue uniting people to create equitable and just public policy that recognizes the dignity and worth of every human and moves us to a place where all Maine people have the social and economic opportunity to be free.

“Free from hunger and poverty. Free from violence and addiction and abuse. Free from oppression and discrimination and institutional bias. Free from financial ruin on account of debt, a serious accident, or a chronic illness. Free from tyranny and deception and greed. Free from state interference in personal matters and private decisions.”

—MAINE STATE SENATOR CRAIG HICKMAN
Re-elected to Serve Senate District 14
The Story in Maine

“You know the Maine Senate has flipped four times since 2010 and if we don’t do everything in our power to protect and expand our majority, it could easily flip again.”

—SENATE PRESIDENT TROY JACKSON, RE-ELECTED TO SERVE SENATE DISTRICT 1

With Paul LePage, a gubernatorial candidate who boasted that he was “Trump before Trump” on the ballot, it was clear that Maine was a major target for the rightwing in 2022. This is why, for the first time since we started working in the state in 2018, The States Project worked to protect majorities in both state chambers.

In the State Senate, our goal was to defend the majority and we won each of the four seats we needed. We helped hold SD-1, Troy Jackson; SD-14, Craig Hickman, and SD-26, Tim Nangle while helping David LaFountain win SD-16. A narrow loss in SD-20 was offset with an additional seat won in SD-8 by Mike Tipping. Margins in this chamber held steady.

But, if just 1,709 votes had changed across these five districts, the radical right would now control Maine’s Senate.

In the State House, the rightwing needed to win nine seats to shift the balance of power. They won eight new seats but the majority won seven — we helped hold ground with just one loss in the chamber.

Candidates we supported in Maine won nine seats by fewer than 200 votes — razor thin margins. In fact, if just 843 voters across those nine seats had changed their votes, the chamber would have been lost.

In the end, voters re-elected candidates who protected safe drinking water, expanded school breakfast programs, implemented paid family leave, installed an insulin price cap and passed salary increases across those nine seats by fewer than 200 votes — we helped hold the line with just one loss.

Majority Holders

President Troy Jackson
Senator District 1
Craig Hickman
Senator District 14
Tim Nangle
Senator District 26
David LaFountain
Senator District 16

In the State Senate, the rightwing needed to win nine seats to shift the balance of power. They won eight new seats but the majority won seven — we helped hold ground with just one loss in the chamber.

Candidates we supported in Maine won nine seats by fewer than 200 votes — razor thin margins. In fact, if just 843 voters across those nine seats had changed their votes, the chamber would have been lost.

The Game Plan

TV was key, particularly for Senate President Troy Jackson and Senator Craig Hickman. Our contributions supported compelling messages based on their legislative records and made sure their constituents understood what was at stake in these elections.

And layering tactics was critical. We helped ensure that there were resources for high-quality mailers and digital ads, especially in the right quantity and combination to engage voters across different platforms. TV was essential to President Jackson’s ability to hold his seat, but without a mail program the results might have been different. Mail amplified the messages on TV and ensured that folks in his district who weren’t seeing TV ads were still hearing about him.

In the House we helped bring all of our in-state partners together to align on strategy and tactics, which gave us a chance to expand the field. With 50 competitive seats in a chamber of 151 districts, our partners worked across the state to ensure that every critical seat was covered with the tactics and strategy needed to win.

The Path to Power

Senate President Troy Jackson, a fifth-generation logger who was born and raised in his district, represents SD-1, a large rural area in Northern Maine that went for Trump by 8 percent in 2016 and by 12 percent 2020. But, it is also a district that President Jackson has won since 2018, and four years ago, he became the first Senate President from his district in more than sixty years.

Banking on the idea that they could win this district, the rightwing attacked President Jackson. To protect this strong, critical leader in Maine, our support enabled a combination of TV and digital ad programs aimed at reminding voters of his accomplishments as a lawmaker.

In a much tighter margin than in years past, President Jackson held SD-1 by just over 600 votes.

The Future

Maine elected its most diverse majorities ever in 2022, with more representation of immigrant and Black state lawmakers than in years past. In fact, the majority that TSP helped defend has elected the first Black Speaker of the House to ever serve in Maine: Rachel Talbot Ross.

“I want the people of Maine to know that they’re in good hands. That they voted the right way, that Democrats intend to lead, and we intend to use all of our tools including working with our friends across the aisle. The best House for the people of the State of Maine is one that’s united, and I intend to do all that I can to make sure that’s a reality.”

—HOUSE SPEAKER RACHEL TALBOT ROSS, RE-ELECTED TO SERVE HOUSE DISTRICT 118

It’s been great to work with The States Project since 2018. They were there with us, had our backs, in a year where probably no one thought we could flip the Senate. And then in 2020, a year where a lot of people thought maybe we couldn’t hold it. And again in the year 2022, it’s going to be a battle to keep the Senate, but like so many of you know, the Senate in Maine, and state legislatures across the country, really hold the line, as we’ve seen what’s happening on the federal level, with things like abortion access.

“We’re fighting hard every day, like I know all of you are, in your communities, supporting us, so more than anything I just wanna say thank you for having our backs. And for thinking about a little state like us as we fight to hold the line here.”

—LILY HERRMANN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MAINE SENATE DEMOCRATIC CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE
CHAMBER
The State House
GOAL
Defend power
STRATEGY
Prevent 10 Losses
NET NUMBER OF SEATS LOST
1
CHAMBER DECIDED BY
616 voters across 9 districts
RACES WON OR LOST WITHIN 5%
14
OUTCOME
Majority Protected!

CHAMBER
The State Senate
GOAL
Defend power
STRATEGY
Prevent 5 Losses
NET NUMBER OF SEATS LOST
0
CHAMBER DECIDED BY
1,709 voters across 5 districts
RACES WON OR LOST WITHIN 5%
5
OUTCOME
Majority Protected!

What Our Dollars Fueled
- Digital: 40%
- Mail: 33%
- Special Election: 7%
- Television: 20%

Digital: Primarily non-skippable pre-roll advertising
Mail: TSP’s contributions help ensure that the optimal number of mail pieces are sent to individual voters, preventing significantly diminishing returns and saving dollars
Special Election: Off-cycle contribution to support a special election
Television: Ads on cable or broadcast TV

Our Work in Maine
2018
Shifted the balance of power in the Senate to create a new Maine trifecta.
2020
Expanded the Senate majority to Maine’s largest in over 30 years.
2021
The #1 contributor in Senator Craig Hickman’s special election. He made history as Maine’s first Black, openly LGBTQ+ State Senator.
2022
Protected both State Legislative majorities to preserve a critical pro-democracy trifecta.

I was raised for a period of time in the backwoods of Maine where I continue to spend a great deal of time because my 85-year-old mother still lives in a rustic farmhouse here.

“As we were going through the process of finding her in-home care, I asked the Maine healthcare worker who interviewed us — I said, ‘I did a lot of work to raise funds for Maine in the 2018 elections. Have you seen a change in this type of care since then?’ And she said to me, ‘Absolutely.’

“So right now I’m sitting in that farmhouse. And it’s in Maine with an elderly senior, who is benefiting from some of the things that we fought to have passed — and her healthcare has improved dramatically.”

“— GIA
Giving Circle Leader, Civics Night at the Soda Fountain
Our Impact in Michigan

MICHIGAN GIVING CIRCLES
All Hands on Deck • Awareness Into Action • Blue Water Blue State • Change for MI Legislature • Dem Flippers • dEMOCRACY Is Local • Dollars for Democracy (Dana) • Downtown Nasty Women Social Group • EffThisShiznit • Ever true • Evil Witches • Fight for Democracy Fire Rabbit’s Revenge Giving Circle • Flipping Seats and Taking Names • From Seattle with Love Giving Circle • Help Us Turn Michigan’s Legislature Blue 2022! • Jill’s Giving Circle Laura and Matt’s Giving Circle • Let’s Go Blue, Michigan! • Los Angeles Giving Circle M Go-Blue from MA! • Michigan Strong • Midwest Friends • Nevertheless, She Persisted One State at a Time • OY VEY THINGS ARE NOT OK! • Oy vey, it’s not okay • Path to Save Democracy • PENT UP • Potlucks and Politics • Raising the States Giving Circle Resilience Initiative • ReSisters Giving Circle • Save Our States • States Focus Giving Circle Swing These States • The Golden Girls Giving Circle • The Wednesday Group • Together For Choice • Uphold Democracy

KEY PARTNERSHIPS
National Democratic Redistricting Committee • Vote Save America

“Nobody’s going to care or remember who Veronica Klinefelt is 20 years from now. But what they will remember is what happened during this time. And so if I fail, and because of that, we don’t have protection in the Legislature, that’s something that I’ll carry with me for the rest of my life.”

—VERONICA KLINEFELT
Elected by Michigan Senate District 11 to The New York Times
Michigan was one of the states where rightwing state lawmakers who held the majority were flown to the Oval Office to be persuaded to overturn the 2020 election for Donald Trump. We knew the state would continue to be a critical part of the rightwing’s plans in 2024 and that our democracy could come down to who holds power in the Michigan state chambers.

Our early investment in both chambers — in 2021, a year ahead of the election — gave our partners confidence in the strength of our commitment. They were able to plan ahead for 2022, mapping out the multiplier effect of improving digital messages that met voters across multiple platforms.

In May 2022, The States Project helped Carol Granville win State House District 74 in a Michigan House Special Election — we believed that protecting HD-74 in a special election would be easier than trying to take it from the rightwing in a general election. That reduced the number of seats needed to tie the chamber — in 2021, a year ahead of the election — gave our partners confidence in the strength of our commitment. They were able to plan ahead for 2022, mapping out the multiplier effect of improving digital messages that met voters across multiple platforms.

The Game Plan
Tested Messaging on Broadcast TV: Advertising on TV is not commonplace at the state legislative level, and Michigan was one of the states where it was critical for our candidates. Michigan is home to several huge media markets, which makes advertising more expensive.

By supporting ad testing, another tactic that has never been used at the state legislative level, we helped ensure that TV messages were effective before they went on the air. This investment maximized the impact of spending on TV and had the multiplier effect of improving digital messages as well — allowing for layered messages that met voters across multiple platforms.

Local Media Support: Michigan was also one of the states where local press was critical. Consultants to support local media coverage — which is groundbreak-
Our Work in Michigan

2018
6 TSP-supported candidates won new districts in the Michigan House.

2020
8 TSP-supported candidates won House seats: 6 incumbents and 2 new seats. 2 incumbent losses meant no change in the balance of power.

2022
TSP-supported candidates won both the House and the Senate for the first Democratic trifecta in Michigan since 1983!

“What After 4 decades of GOP control of the MI Senate, we have the opportunity to deliver meaningful change for our residents on climate, education, an economy that works for all, housing justice, gun violence, health care & a fair justice system. January 2023, we’re so ready for you!”

—Senator Stephanie Chang, re-elected to serve Senate District 3
We’ve been in Michigan since 2018, and we’ve had Giving Circles devoted to Michigan since then. In that first year, we flipped six seats, and in 2020 we held ground. For Giving Circles that year, holding ground could have felt like a loss.

But our Michigan-focused Giving Circles don’t just raise for Michigan in election years — they raise every year. That’s why since 2018, TSP has been able to give the maximum annual state contributions to our partners in Michigan. Giving Circles have worked hard, year over year, helping to keep the margins close and governing control within striking distance.

The unwavering commitment of our Giving Circles to Michigan made this new trifecta possible.

“When we started this work we quickly realized that it wasn’t about one election. It was about investing in and rebuilding our political system. Once you start thinking of it that way, there are no longer on and ‘off’ years. And when you are at the same time building a community of people who share common goals and hopes for our country, the work becomes a joy and an antidote to despair. Even in years when the results were not what we hoped, we had a continued sense of purpose in doing this together.”

— AMY
Giving Circle Leader, One State at a Time
“First of all I want to say thank you. We are in this new position — a trifecta! — because of you. And I am not saying that lightly. I would be remiss if I didn’t say that a lot of this effort has been in large part because of our partnership with The States Project at an early stage of the campaign.”

—OUTGOING SENATE LEADER MELISA LÓPEZ FRANZEN
The Story in Minnesota

The Game Plan

Our earliest investments supported staffing, which was crucial to achieving our goals in Minnesota. We helped our in-state partners create an innovative staffing infrastructure to stretch budgets and set early foundations for effective campaigns. Giving Circles leaders who live in Minnesota told us about how different the races felt from prior cycles because they could see and hear state legislative messaging in their communities for the first time.

We supported historic investments in television ads that were unique to each district and tested before they aired in critical markets for Senate races. State legislative candidates had never before been on broadcast television in Minnesota!

We were also able to support polling and research that helped guide decision-making down the stretch.

Local broadcast journalists make effective state legislative candidates — they build careers sharing news stories, so they understand local issues and are well-known to voters. Rob Kupec served Senate District 4 as a weatherman on broadcast television for more than 20 years, so we worked with our in-state partners to fuel investment in his race. He held a seat that had been redistricted for the rightwing by just over 1,700 votes!

The Path to Power

In the Minnesota Senate, Judy Seebberger, a teacher, paramedic advocate, mom and military wife won District 41, the tie-breaking seat in the Senate, by 321 votes. Just 161 voters changing could have prevented the new majority in the Minnesota Senate.

Just 161 voters changing could have prevented the new majority in the Minnesota Senate.

A Pivotial Moment in Our Minnesota Campaign

Giving Circles raised the first Minnesota investment, long before most people were thinking about giving political dollars. Thanks to those funds, our in-state partners were able to hire skilled staff months earlier than they had ever had in previous cycles. This kind of early investment was unprecedented in Minnesota, and the outcome was phenomenal — a new trifecta, governing control in both chambers and the gubernatorial seat. Giving Circles seeded this success!

The Future

What will Minnesota’s new trifecta be able to do with governing control of the legislature? Here are policies that have been introduced in the past but couldn’t pass without governing power.

• Protect reproductive healthcare for millions as the state is now a destination for patients from surrounding states — Iowa, North Dakota, and South Dakota — seeking access to safe, legal medical care.
• Support working families with paid family leave.
• Invest in clean energy to spur innovation and revenue, build resilient infrastructure and lower costs for all Minnesotans.

The value of our partnership with The States Project can’t be overstated. They helped us modernize our campaign’s structure and operations to help us make smarter decisions.

“From the first staffers we hired back in 2021, The States Project helped us hit the ground running, building momentum much earlier than we were ever able to before.

“We knew early in the election cycle that this was going to be an uphill battle. The strategic efforts from this partnership ensured our races were competitive and helped power the new trifecta.”

—SENATOR KARI DZEIDZIC, NEW MINNESOTA SENATE MAJORITY LEADER, RE-ELECTED TO SERVE SENATE DISTRICT 60

“I am not afraid to stand up for what is right — even if it comes at personal cost. I believe politicians should seek to improve the lives of their constituents and their state, and I pledge to do exactly that. After all, helping people is what I do.”

—JUDY SEEBERGER, ELECTED TO SERVE SENATE DISTRICT 41

“I am excited to represent the people of District 18A and the people across Minnesota. Let’s make the next two years about something good we can do together, and not more fear, division and tearing down each other. Simply put — our kids are watching.”

—JEFF BRAND, ELECTED TO SERVE HOUSE DISTRICT 18A

“My sense of gratitude is only matched by my sense of determination. I promise from my first day in the State Senate, I won’t stop working to make Western Minnesota a better, safer, more prosperous place to live, work, and raise a family.”

—ROB KUPEC, ELECTED TO SERVE SENATE DISTRICT 4

In the House, three candidates won seats needed to hold the majority — Jeff Brand, who was redistricted to a new seat, won HD-18A; Matt Norris won Twin Cities’ HD-32B; and Jerry Newton won open seat HD-35B.

If 737 votes had gone the other way, the chamber would be under rightwing control.

“The result? We held ground to defend the Minnesota legislature. We were the largest state legislative funder in Minnesota, and refused to leave any opportunity on the table. We believed winning the State Senate majority was possible, and helped make sure the focus was not just on defending the State House.

This was our first election cycle in Minnesota, and our staff and the in-state partners were able to hire skilled staff months earlier than they had ever had in previous cycles. This kind of early investment was unprecedented in Minnesota, and the outcome was phenomenal — a new trifecta, governing control in both chambers and the gubernatorial seat. Giving Circles seeded this success!

We were also able to support polling and research that helped guide decision-making down the stretch.

“We were the largest state legislative funder in Minnesota, and refused to leave any opportunity on the table. We believed winning the State Senate majority was possible, and helped make sure the focus was not just on defending the State House. While we saw the opportunity for a new majority, it was still an uphill battle.

“We held ground to defend the Minnesota House — the rightwing gained six seats, but that was offset by six wins of our own that enabled us to hold the chamber. In the Senate, we needed to gain three seats for a new majority, and we won the seats we needed. The result? A new trifecta in Minnesota.

“Thanks to those funds, our in-state partners were able to hire skilled staff months earlier than they had ever had in previous cycles. This kind of early investment was unprecedented in Minnesota, and the outcome was phenomenal — a new trifecta, governing control in both chambers and the gubernatorial seat. Giving Circles seeded this success!”

—JEFF BRAND, ELECTED TO SERVE HOUSE DISTRICT 18A

The Story in Minnesota

The Game Plan

Our earliest investments supported staffing, which was crucial to achieving our goals in Minnesota. We helped our in-state partners create an innovative staffing infrastructure to stretch budgets and set early foundations for effective campaigns. Giving Circles leaders who live in Minnesota told us about how different the races felt from prior cycles because they could see and hear state legislative messaging in their communities for the first time.

We supported historic investments in television ads that were unique to each district and tested before they aired in critical markets for Senate races. State legislative candidates had never before been on broadcast television in Minnesota!

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Local broadcast journalists make effective state legislative candidates — they build careers sharing news stories, so they understand local issues and are well-known to voters. Rob Kupec served Senate District 4 as a weatherman on broadcast television for more than 20 years, so we worked with our in-state partners to fuel investment in his race. He held a seat that had been redistricted for the rightwing by just over 1,700 votes!

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By the Numbers

Our Work in Minnesota

2022

In our first cycle in Minnesota, we won the Senate and held the House to create a new trifecta!

What Our Dollars Fueled

- Digital: 24%
- Mail: 3%
- Research: 4%
- Staffing Program: 30%
- Television: 39%

Research: Funding high-quality data — polling and district modeling — to help drive decision-making

Staffing Program: Skilled campaign staff to work across key districts

Television: Audience-tested ads on cable or broadcast TV

By the Numbers

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Giving Circle Spotlight

From that first, pivotal contribution to actually volunteering to knock doors, to the final investment needed to keep Minnesota House digital ads online in the weekend before the election, Minnesota Giving Circles were completely invested in achieving our goals in the state.

“It’s been about creating community, and also, hope.

“We’ve created community with The States Project’s staff, other Giving Circle Leaders, and especially of course our 114 Giving Circle members. We have monthly online education and fundraising events. We have a Facebook Group and a newsletter to share updates and volunteer opportunities, and we have monthly potluck dinners. We really hope and plan to keep our Circle going beyond this one election.

“We’re surrounded on several sides by very red states. We’re a sanctuary state for women seeking reproductive healthcare — a lot of states surrounding us are banning abortion, so we are sort of an island of hope.”

—PAULA
Co-leader, SEEDMN Giving Circle

Pictured: A ‘Seed Pod’ potluck dinner at the house of SeedMN and SeedPod Leaders Roger Hurd and Tamara Nelson. This is a group of about 10-12 folks who regularly gather to socialize, discuss the Circle’s progress and needs, and also to plan and debrief on volunteer activities for candidates.
Our Impact in Nebraska

NEBRASKA GIVING CIRCLES
Nebraskans For Democracy

KEY PARTNERSHIP
Vote Save America

“For about 30 years I’ve been active in Nebraska Democratic politics, and I can tell you this is the most excitement we’ve had on the ground in probably 20 years. The most possibility of success and growth going forward. And part of that — a huge part of that — is the interest of The States Project.”

— SENATOR JOHN CAVANAUGH
Re-elected to Serve Senate District 9
Our goal going into Nebraska was to prevent a supermajority by protecting every seat in Nebraska’s 17-member minority in this unicameral legislature.

What kinds of policies has this minority blocked?

An extreme abortion ban, tax breaks for contributions to private schools, the carrying of concealed weapons without a state license or required training.

The 17-seat minority was right at the threshold to block policies that would infringe on the rights and freedoms of Nebraskans. We could not afford to lose a single seat.

And at stake in the 2024 presidential election — the ability to prevent any laws seeking to overturn the will of the voters by reassigning how electoral votes are allotted after an election has taken place.

The strategy in the state was to protect vulnerable incumbents while evaluating other districts to determine where a seat could be gained after the state’s redistricting process.

Due to the tight nature of the races and their outcomes, it’s clear that district selection was a critical element of success. While candidates we supported did not win every race, they won the ones that mattered most to prevent a supermajority.

Our Work in Nebraska

In our first year in Nebraska, we prevented a rightwing supermajority.

CHAMBER
NE Legislature

GOAL
Hold Ground

STRATEGY
Prevent 1 Loss

NET NUMBER OF SEATS LOST
0

CHAMBER DECIDED BY
41 voters across 1 district

RACES WON OR LOST
WITHIN 5%
5

OUTCOME
Supermajority Prevented!

By the Numbers

What Our Dollars Fueled

| Digital | 21% |
| Door Knocking Challenge | 37% |
| Get Out The Vote | 18% |
| Mail | 16% |
| Partner Staffing | 8% |

Mail: Mail pieces in districts with gaps in the final weeks of their mail program to ensure late-deciding voters in key races were seeing critical final messages in their mailboxes.

Partner Staffing: Resourcing an in-state partner with skilled campaign staff.

On the eve of the election, Frederickson posted this thread.

The Story in Nebraska

The Path to Power

With half of the legislature up for election, the minority’s current 17 seats were right at the threshold — one-third of the lawmakers in the legislature — to block the most extreme policies from being enacted.

When the rightwing won SD-12 by ~500 votes, preventing the supermajority came down to one of the tightest races we worked on in 2022. John Frederickson, a mental health professional, won SD-20 to hold the necessary 17th seat by 69 votes.

On the eve of the election, Frederickson posted this thread.
Giving Circle Spotlight

Interview with Andrew, co-leader Nebraskans for Democracy Giving Circle

Why did you choose Nebraska?
I grew up in Omaha and still have deep ties there with family and friends. I continue to care about its future and when I saw TSP chose NE as a state to target, I wanted to engage my network.

What did you enjoy most about leading a Giving Circle?
Rallying the troops and trying to get as many like-minded people to join the crusade and spread the word. I needed to educate on the ever-growing importance of state legislatures and get folks to wrap their heads around the dangers of a supermajority that was on the line.

Will you come back to work with TSP in future elections?
Of course. I've learned so much about the amazing work being done across the country by TSP and I'm inspired by the results from the midterms. But I know there is still much work to be done.

Quote from Senator Wendy DeBoer, who was re-elected to serve SD-10 by ~900 votes, on the importance of upholding our democracy.

“This morning Lou Ann Goding graciously called to congratulate me on winning re-election. I want to thank her for a hard fought race and for her dedication to our state.

“Democracy is fragile, but I am constantly hopeful when good folks like Mrs. Goding show up, do the work, and participate in our electoral system.

“I also want to express my deep honor and gratitude that the people of District 10 have again put their trust in me. I will continue to give my entire heart and everything I have to be the best Senator I can possibly be for everyone in our district and throughout Nebraska.”
Our Impact in Nevada

"The value that you all have brought to the effort this year is huge, and it’s really helping us build one of the biggest programs we’ve ever done. We need to hold our legislatures where we can and grow our majorities in other places. The policy outcomes that come from that end up being some of the most impactful policy work that’s happening around the country, and it’s only possible if we hold onto our gains and build on them."

—PETER KOLTAK
Senate Director, NV Legislative Victory

NEVADA GIVING CIRCLES
Downtown Nasty Women Social Group • Jane’s Giving Circle

KEY PARTNERSHIP
Vote Save America
There can be no greater validation of the impact of The States Project’s intervention to hold state legislative majorities in Nevada than this: while the rightwing won the governor’s race and came within 1 percent of taking Nevada’s U.S. Senate seat, we helped expand both majorities in the state legislature — which in 2018 became the country’s first woman-majority legislature.

In the State Senate, Senators Marilyn Dondero Loop (SD-8) and Melanie Scheible (SD-9) defended their seats. Julie Pazina was elected to serve SD-12. But a new majority would control the chamber if just 3,129 voters had gone the other way across these three districts.

With these wins, TSP-supported candidates netted two new seats in the Senate and are just one seat away from a veto-proof supermajority in the legislature.

In the State Assembly, we went into the election needing to avoid four losses. Our candidates held every vulnerable seat, picked up two new seats, and gained a supermajority.

The Game Plan

Much of our work in Nevada was about protecting incumbents, but it was also critical to identify any seats that we could potentially pick up. Thanks to Giving Circles, which powered our investment in the state, we were able to fuel campaigns in the most crucial districts to help maintain both majorities.

All of the candidates we supported across both chambers won their elections with margins within 8 percent of the vote.

The Path to Power

In these 2022 elections, six of the candidates we supported faced opponents who denied that President Biden is the rightful president. All six won their elections against these extremists, including Julie Pazina, who was elected to serve Senate District 12.

“The Story in Nevada

We’re the last line here. We’ve got to hold this line because we’re that close to just turning into a state that doesn’t value people, education, or freedom. I am so thankful that The States Project has decided to invest in Nevada, we frankly just could not do this without the financial support that comes from The States Project and its Giving Circles.

“And I’ll tell you, for our members, it has been highly encouraging for me to be able to say, ‘Look it’s not just us here; we have a whole nation of people who are supportive of the policies we’re bringing, of the work that we’re doing.’ It really does have a motivating factor.”

—REPRESENTATIVE STEVE YEAGER, NEVADA CAUCUS LEADER, RE-ELECTED TO ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 9

Personal is Political: Tragedy to Policy that Protects Nevadans

Shortly after Assemblywoman Sandra Jauregui was first elected to serve Assembly District 41, in 2017, she attended the Route 91 Harvest festival in Las Vegas, where a gunman opened fire, killing nearly 60 people and wounding more than 400.

In 2022, she was able to pass commonsense background checks on gun sales. Her leadership has saved lives.

Assemblywoman Jauregui was re-elected to continue serving her district in 2022.
Giving Circle Spotlight

“Our mission has always been to support women’s rights and marginalized communities. That’s why we chose to work in Nevada, to help protect its strong voter rights and abortion access laws. Nevada is surrounded by red states that are dismantling abortion rights, so it has become a sanctuary state for women needing abortions and other reproductive healthcare.

“We are committed to working with TSP in future elections. We initially partnered with TSP for many reasons, but the most important was that our core values were aligned, and that remains true today.”

— KIM
Giving Circle Leader, Downtown Nasty Women Social Group

What Our Dollars Fueled

- Candidate Contributions 33%
- Digital 67%

Candidate Contributions: Contributions to candidates’ campaigns
Digital: Primarily non-skippable pre-roll advertising

Our Work in Nevada

- 2022

In our first election cycle in Nevada, we helped defend both chambers.

CHAMBER
The State Assembly

GOAL
Defend Power

STRATEGY
Prevent 4 Losses

NET NUMBER OF SEATS GAINED
+2

CHAMBER DECIDED BY
3,536 voters across 7 districts

OUTCOME
Majority Protected!

CHAMBER
The State Senate

GOAL
Defend Power

STRATEGY
Prevent 2 Losses

NET NUMBER OF SEATS GAINED
+1

CHAMBER DECIDED BY
3,129 voters across 3 districts

OUTCOME
Majority Protected!
Our Impact in North Carolina

NORTH CAROLINA GIVING CIRCLES
A & L’s States Project Giving Circle • Action > Despair • Allie’s Giving Circle • Blue Devils for NC • Bluebirds • Cardinal Points: North Carolina • Democracy Sprint NC States Project Earth and Education For All • Fighting for Justice in the States • Grace’s Birthday Giving Circle • JaneDAO: A Movement to Protect Reproductive Rights • Los Angeles Giving Circle Lynne’s Giving & Engagement Circle — Finer in Carolina • Mad Moms • Maggie and Nicole’s Giving Circle • NC — Fighting for our Future • NC Canaries • North Carolina — for the People, by the People • Poltica NC 2022 • San Francisco Black and Jewish Unity Coalition • Save NC • Save Our States • Seniors Taking Action • Take Back Our States To What End (the Patriarchy) • Treat People with Kindness • We Want Our State Back Woodmont Permaculture Giving Circle

KEY PARTNERSHIP
Vote Save America

“We’re not going for a majority in North Carolina, and on the surface that can seem boring. But there is so much at stake if the governor loses his veto power. There are basic things — reproductive rights, voting rights, public education funding — on the chopping block all of the time in the state.”

—MARYLI SECREST
Regional Political Director, The States Project
The Story in North Carolina

After the State Supreme Court prevented an extreme Republican gerrymander earlier this year, new maps were enacted. In what we fully expected to be a tough year, we anticipated tight races in North Carolina. After the State Supreme Court prevented an extreme Republican gerrymander earlier this year, we believed that there were paths for the rightwing to regain supermajorities in both chambers. We needed to block a supermajority in one chamber to protect Governor Cooper’s veto power against a radical agenda that includes abortion bans and anti-voter policies. We saw a clearer path to our goal in the State House where we needed to prevent losing three seats.

Unfortunately, because there wasn’t a majority to defend or challenge in North Carolina, this wasn’t a chamber that attracted investment from other national groups until later in the race. Our earliest investments seeded programs that helped make these races more competitive, which then attracted other donors to invest. In key races, we made sure that our in-state partners were as close to parity as possible with Republicans in terms of spending on TV. The fact that our support allowed candidates’ messages to get out on TV in some crucial districts was critical to blocking the rightwing supermajority in the House.

With a net of -2, we were able to hold off a supermajority in North Carolina. We preserved enough power to stave off what would have been a devastating rightwing victory.

The Game Plan

Every one of the districts targeted in North Carolina was a tight race. Our in-state partners needed the widest path possible to prevent losing three seats — no close races could be left on the table.

Layering television with digital ads in North Carolina was essential to meeting voters with candidates’ messages. Our investment got candidates in critical districts up on TV. Our resources and expertise allowed in-state partners to add digital ads to ensure as many campaign touches as possible, and to help reach the younger populations in key districts.

The Path to Power

Diamond Staton-Williams, in HD-73, won her race — the district that prevented a rightwing supermajority — by 629 votes. In addition to our candidate contribution fueled by Giving Circles, she received donations from Give Smart — where members of The States Project community give directly to candidates — which bolstered investment in her race so she could invest in TV ads at parity with her competitor.

“Our campaign wasn’t just a campaign. It was a movement. Communities with little in common but a desire for something better for the next generation came together.”
—Diamond Staton-Williams, Elected to Serve House District 73
New Faces in the North Carolina House

Longtime county commissioner, farmer, and community advocate Ray Jeffers was elected to serve House District 2, the district in which he was born and raised. "I am honored to have won an election to the North Carolina House. My heartfelt thanks to volunteers and voters who invested time in our democracy and have faith in positive change. To everyone in Person and Durham counties, I look forward to representing and supporting you!"

Laura Budd was elected to serve House District 103 by less than 5 percent of the vote. "I promise to roll-up my sleeves and get to work on the issues that matter to South Charlotte, Matthews, and all corners of District 103. Working families need someone who will fight for our schools, our local economy, and our community. I will be a strong voice in Raleigh to represent the unique needs of our district and make sure our state government is working for you!"

Giving Circle Spotlight

North Carolinian Ilene is a mother of two and grandmother to six, working to engage other seniors in activism at the state level. She co-leads the Seniors Taking Action Giving Circle to help support state legislative candidates committed to improving lives. "For the dozens of members in my Giving Circle, protecting democracy is a daily effort through writing postcards, making phone calls, and otherwise investing our time, money, and lived experiences as part of a unified front."

THE STATES PROJECT IN THE MEDIA

VOICES: Elders organize to defend democracy in the states

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READ THE OP-ED
Our Impact in Pennsylvania

PENNSYLVANIA GIVING CIRCLES
Across State Lines • Act Now...Our Democracy Depends on it • Adopt Pennsylvania • All Friends United • Amanda and Michelle's Giving Circle • Andrea's Pennsylvania Giving Circle • Andrew's Giving Circle • Anger into Action Caroline, Nicki & Melissa's Channel Your Rage Giving Circle • Creatives for Democracy • Doing Yinz Best in the ‘Burgh • Dollars for Democracy (Dana) • Fiona's Birthday Giving Circle to Make PA a Better State • Fired Up for Democracy • Flipping Seats for PA • Forever35 Podcast Giving Circle • From the PNW, with love • Go Blue PA Good Trouble • Help Save Democracy • Impact Intent • Impact The States • IndivisibleWeStand • JAC's Giving Circle • Justice for All • Kelly's Giving Circle • Local Level Donors • Markers For Democracy • nolite te bastardes carborundorum • Nothing Compares 2 Flipping PA Blue • Ordinary Folks Fight for Democracy! • Our Strategic Giving Circle: Leveraging Power in State Legislatures • PA Say Gay • Paint a State Blue! • Pennsylvania Power People for Pennsylvania • Pitch In for Pennsylvania • Purple to Blue • Sarah's Giving Circle • Save Democracy Now SaveYourState22 • Saving Democracy in Pennsylvania • Solidarity Across the States 2022 • State by State Democracy Matters! • State Fair • Steffanie's Giving Circle • Stop the Spiral • Summit Marches On Giving Circle • The Blue Wave • The Fight of Our Lives • The Shirtwaists • The Wednesday Group • Tracy Place Giving Circle Voters for Harlow • Wake Up PA! • WNY supporting the State of PA

KEY PARTNERSHIPS
National Democratic Redistricting Committee • Vote Save America

“There aren’t many national groups that focus on state legislatures, yet when we talk about the greatest threats to democracy, they come from state capitols. The partnership with The States Project was critical to our entire operation. From ensuring best practices to their financial support to their true partnership to work with us, it’s all a huge value add to our efforts.”

—TREVOR SOUTHERLAND
Executive Director, Pennsylvania House Democratic Campaign Committee
There was no doubt that Pennsylvania would be key to any plans to steal the presidency in 2024. The rightwing’s gubernatorial candidate, a former state lawmaker, was subpoenaed by the January 6th committee for his actions at the Capitol.

We knew that to have any chance to protect our democracy, we needed to end rightwing control of at least one chamber in the Pennsylvania legislature by 2024. But, as national funders largely ignored Pennsylvania state legislative races in these elections, it was clear that not everyone believed winning a majority in the State House was possible. With the fairest maps in decades, we knew that investment in 2022 races was critical if we wanted to keep the chamber within striking distance in the next election.

Our candidates gained the 12 seats needed for governing control.

Our investment, and the momentum we built in the state, paid off with new governing power in the House for the first time since 2010. With the House majority and a Democratic governor, more policies needed for governing control. Our continued work for districts that the majority won had knocked on more than 151,000 doors.

By November, our candidates, including Lisa Borowski, who won HD-168, were running the most effective messages that would cast the most votes.

Within a week of the election, TSP-supported candidates won 11 seats. We anxiously waited for results in two key races: Mark Mofa in HD-142 and Missy Cerrato in HD-151.

After every ballot was counted, Mofa conceded as it appeared that he was down by 59 votes.

Cerrato, however, won her seat — the tipping point 12th seat that shifted the chamber majority — by 63 votes.

The Path to Power

In Pennsylvania, The States Project was the top funder in state legislative races, spending 80 times what the next largest group invested in the state. In a midterm where every seat in the House was up for election, we believed that we could help make enough progress toward winning the 12 seats needed for an outright majority by 2024.

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Local Media Support: The States Project fueled media specialists in Pennsylvania to support local news outreach for 12 candidates running in vulnerable seats. Eight of the candidates who participated in the program won their elections, including Lisa Borowski, who won HD-168.

Tested Messaging on Broadcast TV: In Pennsylvania, home to several major media markets, we knew TV could be a game changer. For the first time ever at the state legislative level, TSP made ad testing possible. Every TV ad that we fueled was tested before it was broadcasted, to ensure campaigns were running the most effective messages that would net the most votes.

The Game Plan

We worked with our in-state partners to support a full program in Pennsylvania, layering effective messages through tactics that reinforced each other as they met voters across a variety of platforms: Building Infrastructure Through Smart Staffing: A partnership with Blue Leadership Collaborative (BLC) helped our in-state partners recruit and retain skilled campaign managers in key races. BLC identifies and trains leaders from all backgrounds, equipping them with education and mentorship to run winning campaigns.

Door Knocking — The Most Important Tactic In Pennsylvania This Cycle: There is tremendous value in a candidate meeting voters at the doors and listening to their concerns. Studies show that candidates and campaigns in these key districts. And there was another critical benefit. In Pennsylvania, staff from the deep-canvassing program were able to transition into campaigns — folks who had already been working to engage voters in key districts since 2021 brought that on-the-ground knowledge and experience from day one.

The Future

In 2020, when we helped to hold ground in the Pennsylvania House, minority lawmakers elected Pennsylvania’s first-ever Black woman Minority Leader, Joanna McClinton, a critical voice in the state who became the highest-ranking woman to serve in the General Assembly’s 244 years.

She could be the first Black woman to serve as Pennsylvania’s Speaker of the House.

This program was an innovation at the state legislative level. Before maps were finalized, we worked with our in-state partners to focus strategically on areas we predicted would become the most competitive state legislative districts. Our in-state partners on this project helped ensure that any insights generated directly shaped the persuasive messaging used by candidates and campaigns in these key districts.

The A Pivot Moment In Our Pennsylvania Campaign

Long before Pennsylvania’s redistricting was completed, before candidates even filed to run, Giving Circles powered The States Project’s earliest work in the state. A year and a half ahead of the election, Giving Circles fueled a historic deep-canvassing program geared towards understanding the most critical issues for voters in key districts in the state.
By the Numbers

What Our Dollars Fueled

- Candidate Contributions: 1%
- Deep Canvassing Program: 2%
- Digital: 4%
- Door Knocking Challenge: 8%
- Local Media Support: 5%
- Staffing Program: 4%
- Television: 7%

Candidate Contributions: Contributions directly to candidates’ campaigns.

Deep Canvassing Program: Long-form conversations with voters to ensure candidates are using the most effective messages.

Digital: Primarily non-skippable pre-roll advertising.

Door Knocking Challenge: Instead of dialing for dollars, candidates participating in this signature program earn campaign contributions while meeting their voters face-to-face.

Local Media Support: Media specialists who work directly with in-state partners on placing stories — op-eds, interviews, news articles — in local press.

Staffing Program: Skilled campaign staff to work across key districts.

Television: Audience-tested ads on cable or broadcast TV.

An Update From the New Pennsylvania Majority!

By the Numbers

Our Work in Pennsylvania

2020
Helped hold ground gained since 2016. Won 2 House seats, 1 district never won by a Democrat, and an open seat President Biden carried by less than 1%.

2022
Invested more than 80 times what the next group contributed; won a new majority in the House.

The Power of Door Knocking

On Election Day, some of the earliest tossup races called in Pennsylvania were for candidates who were among the highest performers in our Door Knocking Challenge.

On his way to winning House District 30, emergency room physician Dr. Arvind Venkat knocked on nearly 25,000 doors as part of our Door Knocking Challenge. Having treated a patient in his ER who had a back-alley abortion, he decided to run as an advocate for access to safe, legal abortions in Pennsylvania.

“I got into this race because I saw over the last few years how we needed new leadership who was going to bring to our community an emphasis on lifting up the least among us. When we do that, we do the best for all of us.”

— DR. ARVIND VENKAT, ELECTED TO SERVE HOUSE DISTRICT 30

Paul Takac, who beat an election-denying opponent to win House District 82, said that he learned a lot from the voters he met while knocking on almost 10,000 doors in his campaign:

“We need to better support working families and local communities. We need to invest in education, full and fair funding at all levels of education. We need to address climate change and environmental justice, and we need to protect individual rights.”

— PAUL TAKAC, ELECTED TO SERVE HOUSE DISTRICT 82

TSP’s Door Knocking Challenge participants accounted for 94% of the total doors knocked in nearly every competitive PA House race!
Giving Circles’ early, sustained investment in Pennsylvania was key to winning the House.

In 2020, Giving Circles helped us hold ground in the Pennsylvania legislature — not an exciting result, but a critical one that made victory in 2022 possible.

In 2021, understanding how crucial the state would be for protecting our democracy, Pennsylvania Giving Circles went to work, investing in that first deep canvassing program that was pivotal to so much of our work in 2022. This investment was about more than supporting individual candidates; it built power for the ideas that would resonate with voters in a tough election year.

“There are examples all over the world of people fighting for their basic human rights. Here in America, we have the privilege to have a delicate democracy, but a democracy, in place. And we have the infrastructure to create change. So who are we not to get involved?

“That’s why the Giving Circles, and this work with The States Project, is so incredibly important.”

—RENEÉ
Giving Circle Leader, Pitch for Pennsylvania
Targeted Spend
Chambers:
Alaska, Colorado,
New Hampshire,
and Wisconsin

This year The States Project made narrow, targeted investments in chambers where, by collaborating with in-state leadership or partner organizations to fill a specific gap, our support could make a difference.
Alaska: Secure a Bipartisan Coalition

In Alaska, it was critical to help voters understand the new ranked-choice system of voting, which removed some ability by the radical right to primary candidates who showed interest in joining the bipartisan coalition that stands against the rightwing governor.

So far, in the Alaska State Senate, all nine Democrats and eight of 11 Republicans have formed a bipartisan coalition, leaving three rightwing state senators in the minority. While this coalition will only be finalized when members formally convene at the start of the next session, leadership roles and a committee structure have been negotiated by the new coalition.

Although potential members of an Alaska State House coalition have already met, we will not know whether the coalition will be rebuilt until lawmaker negotiations are completed, and that could happen at any moment. Given the way things stand, rebuilding the coalition in the Alaska House is possible but unlikely.

“Thank you for your support of our electoral work. We’re grateful for your confidence in our ranked-choice voting strategy, and for all your work toward building a coalition in our state legislature.”
—CHANTAL DE ALCUAZ, CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE ALASKA CENTER

“Moving forward, we must pivot away from hyper-partisanship to build Alaska’s future. I welcome the responsibility of working respectfully and diligently with all members of the Legislature who are focused on uniting our great state.”

Matt Claman was elected to serve Senate District 00H, a seat that was not projected to go for a coalition candidate, by 612 votes. He is expected to lead the Judiciary Committee when the Senate finalizes the coalition in January.
“We should build on our accomplishments over the last four years. We should be aggressive about our agenda to improve people’s lives and to improve our state. And, most importantly, we should govern as the leaders that Colorado expects and deserves.”

—COLORADO SENATE PRESIDENT STEVE FENBERG, SENATE DISTRICT 18

Colorado: Protect a Trifecta

KEY PARTNERSHIP
National Democratic Redistricting Committee

The rightwing saw an opportunity to shift power in Colorado and targeted the State Senate. In that chamber, they were just three seats away from breaking a pro-democracy trifecta, which would make it difficult for the majority to enact critical policies to improve lives in Colorado.

We partnered with the National Democratic Redistricting Committee to protect the Colorado Senate. And on Election Day, voters expanded the Senate majority by two seats. They gave more governing power to state lawmakers who had enacted policies to protect water quality in schools and daycares, invested in programs to improve public education, and protected election workers from threats and intimidation.
New Hampshire: Governing Control of the House by 2024

**NEW HAMPSHIRE GIVING CIRCLES**
Doing our Best New England • Give a Rouse! • Granite State Giving Circle

**KEY PARTNERSHIP**
National Democratic Redistricting Committee

New Hampshire has a 400-member House of Representatives (the largest chamber in the country) and tiny districts with about 3,000 voters that make it a particularly unique body. After redistricting, the clearest path to a new New Hampshire majority was in the State House, so we helped to design a program that could set us on a path to shifting the balance of power in the chamber.

In the critical two weeks leading up to Election Day, Giving Circles fueled our signature Door Knocking Challenge, which incentivizes candidates to spend the majority of their time meeting voters on the doors. Many of the candidates who participated in our Door Knocking Challenge won their seats by narrow margins — that face-to-face contact was game-changing.

- Zoe Manos (HD-RO 12) knocked 1,545 doors and won by 325 votes
- Eric Turer knocked (HD-RO 6) 484 doors and won by 15 votes
- Ben Ming (HD-HI 35) knocked 370 doors and won by 129 votes
- Heather Baldwin (HD-GR 4) knocked 465 doors and won by 137 votes

The New Hampshire House has 400 House Representatives who each earn a $200 stipend for their 2-year terms — there are often sessions where a number of members are not physically present during voting. With a slim minority in the House, lawmakers can have a significant impact on policy and some ability to protect the most extreme attacks on individual freedoms, like voting and abortion, for all New Hampshirites.

“We’re really grateful to the States Project for their partnership this cycle. It has really solidified door-knocking as a key strategy, which was already a big part of campaign culture here in New Hampshire. The States Project has pushed us to take our targeted mail program to the next level, too. This transformative program really got voters thinking about our incredible down-ballot candidates and the values they share — and it clearly made a positive impact on Election Day.”

— NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSE MINORITY LEADER STATE REPRESENTATIVE MATT WILHELM, HILLSBOROUGH 42
Wisconsin: Prevent a Supermajority

KEY PARTNERSHIP
Vote Save America

Wisconsin’s maps have been so heavily gerrymandered that while President Biden won the state overall in 2020, he only carried 37 of the 99 districts in the State Assembly.

In 2022, on gerrymandered maps, a supermajority that would cost Governor Tony Evers his veto power was just one seat away in the State Senate and five in the Assembly.


This is why The States Project teamed up with our partners at Vote Save America: to prevent a supermajority in the Wisconsin Assembly.

While the rightwing gained the seat they needed in the State Senate, in the Assembly, they could only win three of the five seats they needed — we helped to stop them from getting to the supermajority threshold and protect Governor Evers’ veto power.

“When 50% of the population loses a concrete right, it motivates them to show up to the polls and make their voices heard. It’s really clear from the elections last night that Wisconsinites are not happy with the direction Republicans have been trying to take this state.”

—ASSEMBLY MINORITY LEADER GRETA NEUBAUER, RE-ELECTED TO SERVE ASSEMBLY DISTRICT 66
States on the Frontlines

Protecting Abortion Access

“The Constitution does not confer a right to abortion; Roe and Casey are overruled; and the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives.”
—Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, Writing for the Court’s Rightwing Majority

When the United States Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade in June of 2022, it dealt a devastating blow to Americans’ reproductive freedoms. An abortion ban proposed by rightwing state lawmakers in Mississippi led to this Supreme Court decision that eliminated constitutionally protected abortion access. State lawmakers now determine reproductive healthcare.

A Galvanizing Moment for Giving Circles

At The States Project, we worked tirelessly to educate the public about why the fight to protect our fundamental personal freedoms will be won or lost based on who holds the majorities in state legislatures. And more than 100 Giving Circles formed in response to the fall of Roe.

Overwhelmingly, these Circles were led by women who chose action over despair in a moment that set women’s rights back by nearly five decades.

“Even before Dobbs, we were becoming increasingly aware of the fact that in many states, the far right has been chipping away at a whole slew of rights. I think I looked at The States Project and saw that this is Ground Zero — this is where we have to place our focus.”
—Barbara
Giving Circle Leader

“As a labor and delivery nurse, I knew just voting wasn’t enough anymore. Starting a Giving Circle gave me a way to support candidates who would uphold the will of the people they represent — because most people believe patients should be able to make their own healthcare decisions.”
—Marisa
Giving Circle Leader

“When Roe v Wade was overturned I had just had my second child, so understanding what it was like to have an uncomplicated, planned pregnancy was at the top of my mind. It worried me that for some, routine healthcare could now be decided by strangers at their state capital.”
—Natsumi
Giving Circle Leader
STATE-BY-STATE:
Building Power for Lawmakers to Protect Choice

In many states, our electoral work powered results that will make it possible for lawmakers to protect the freedom to choose for millions of Americans.

After The States Project helped gain governing power in the Maine State Senate in 2018, lawmakers in Augusta expanded access to safe abortions and paid sick leave. This year, we helped to defend the majorities in both chambers — which were top rightwing targets — protecting reproductive healthcare for all Mainers.

Our work to win control of both the State House and State Senate in Michigan cleared the path for lawmakers to overturn an archaic 1931 law on the books that criminalizes abortion in the state.

With Roe v. Wade under threat, people from nearby states like North Dakota and South Dakota may be forced to travel to Minnesota to access a safe abortion. By helping to win a trifecta in the state, we’ve helped protect reproductive healthcare for millions in that area of the country.

During the last legislative session, rightwing lawmakers in Nebraska tried to pass a trigger ban that would have effectively ended abortion protections in the state when Roe v. Wade was overturned. The bill was prevented by a slim margin of state lawmakers. Our work to prevent a supermajority in the state will protect against the most extreme attacks on Nebraskans’ freedom.

Post-Roe in North Carolina, the stakes are high as it is one of the last states in the South to have legal abortion access. Our work to prevent a rightwing supermajority protects Gov. Roy Cooper’s veto power to block the most restrictive bans.

Before the election, rightwing majorities in Pennsylvania were working on advancing an anti-abortion constitutional amendment to attack reproductive healthcare in the state without invoking Governor Wolf’s veto power. Our work to help win the State House gives the new majority power to protect abortion for Pennsylvanians and residents of bordering states like West Virginia and Ohio.
Defending American democracy drove The States Project’s work in 2022. Why? Because since the summer of 2020, our team recognized that the rightwing was laying the groundwork to leverage their state legislative majorities to steal the presidency. The mobs that ravaged the United States Capitol on January 6th, 2021, were calling on Mike Pence to send rightful election results back to the states so that rightwing state majorities could ignore their own voters and select presidential electors for Donald Trump.

When the Supreme Court took up <i>Moore v. Harper</i> in 2022, it was clear that the risks to our democracy were even higher. The case could give state legislatures complete control over federal elections by removing state courts or governors as key checks to state legislative power. In its most extreme form, the court’s decision could validate the radical idea that in the midst of fabricated chaos and delays, state lawmakers could ignore the will of their voters and award presidential electors to the candidate of their choice, regardless of who their voters choose.

From anti-voter policies that determine everything from who votes, how we vote, and even how and when votes are counted, state lawmakers are on the frontlines of defending — or dismantling — democracy as we know it.

We knew The States Project was uniquely qualified to mount a defense across the most critical state legislatures. With analyses of every state legislature, expertise in evidenced-based campaign tactics in state legislature races, and crucial relationships that could help protect the future of free and fair elections in this country.

Arizona

In Arizona, where we spent almost 30 times the next largest giver, we focused on holding ground in this critical battleground state. By keeping both chambers within a one seat margin, pro-democracy state lawmakers are in a strong position to work across the aisle to stand against extremist rightwing attempts to overturn rightful, valid election results in 2024. Ultimately this would protect Arizona’s 11 electoral votes from being stolen.

Michigan

While other groups focused on holding ground in the State House, we saw a path to winning the majority in both chambers, and contributed 8 times the next largest group to caucuses and candidates to help achieve it. We successfully shifted the balance of power in the State House and the State Senate, and, with the reelection of Governor Whitmer, have helped build a new trifecta in Lansing for the first time in nearly 40 years. This new governing power ensures the state’s 15 electoral votes will go to the presidential candidate that voters select in 2024.

Nebraska

In Nebraska, electoral votes are allocated to the presidential candidate who wins each congressional district. One-third of the legislature can block emergency policies — like reallocating the way electoral votes are assigned after an election has taken place — from being enacted in Nebraska. That’s why we focused on defending the 17 seats that pro-democracy lawmakers held going into Election Day. Our work to prevent a supermajority means those lawmakers can protect a single electoral vote in a purple district from being stolen in a narrow presidential race.

New Hampshire

In the Granite State, where lawmakers will take office before the presidential safe-harbor deadline, we knew we had two chances to win power ahead of the next presidential election, in 2022 and 2024. We believed that we could shift power in the chamber, and with recounts in several extremely tight races underway, it appears that we’re just short of our goal. The good news? Winning outright control of this chamber — and protecting four electoral votes — will be just a few seats away in 2024.

Pennsylvania

Similarly, in Pennsylvania, we knew that we needed to make progress this November toward winning the State House by 2024. After all the votes were counted, we won the chamber a cycle early, contributing 80 times what the next group contributed. Today, that critical governing power can protect Pennsylvania’s 19 electoral votes and make sure they go to the presidential candidate that voters choose in 2024.

With these results, we are in a better position to defend our democracy than most thought possible on Election Day. This does not mean that the rightwing’s path to stealing the 2024 presidency is closed. But it does mean we’ve made significant progress toward shoring up our democracy at its foundations: in state legislatures.

Our State-by-State Strategy
The Tightest Margins

Nearly 60 races across all the closest states were won or lost with margins of less than 5%. And 49 of them? Decided by fewer than 1000 votes. Some of those 49 were losses — most were wins. All were incredibly close. Working in the tightest races is the most critical thing we do to hold or build power. That’s why your work here matters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAMBER</th>
<th>DISTRICT</th>
<th>CANDIDATE</th>
<th>VOTES THAT DECIDED THE RACE</th>
<th>WIN/LOSS MARGIN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MN Senate</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Judy Seeberger***</td>
<td>321</td>
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<tr>
<td>MI Senate</td>
<td>12*</td>
<td>Rep. Kevin Hertel**</td>
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<td>ME Senate</td>
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<td>David LaFountain</td>
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<td>Kari Rehrauer</td>
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<td>Cindy Maxwell-Ostdiek</td>
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</table>

*Seat that decided chamber control.
**Benefited from TSP’s Give Smart program, which drives online donors’ direct support to candidates in the closest races.

The closest loss and closest win decided the Pennsylvania House!
To Our Giving Circles

And the stakes are too high to sit on the sidelines.

Thank you to all of the Giving Circles who raised dollars for all of our states, to fill gaps where the funds were needed most!

$350 by 35 • A Brighter Future for Peashoot! • Above the City Circle • Amber Bowles’s Giving Circle • Americans Defending Our Democracy • Ann’s Giving Circle • Anne’s Giving Circle • Ava’s Giving Circle • Bebe’s Family Better Future For Our Kids Giving Circle • BH bans off our bodies • BigBlueHouse • Blue Hearts for Michigan Blue Revolution Flips A State Legislature Blue • Blue Saguaro • Blue Women, Red State • Blues for Democracy and Choice • Bradley, Liles & Friends Giving Circle • Building Power From the Ground Up • Care for Carolina Carla’s Giving Circle • Charise’s Giving Circle • Christine S’s Giving Circle • Code Blue Montana • Comrade Besties • Cyd’s Giving Circle • Dan’s Giving Circle • DC Blue Wave • Defense Against the 19th Century Fund Doctors for Democracy USA • Drive Across America to Save America • Every Effort Counts • Fallallops 6/24 • Feliz for Democracy • Fighting Irish • FLIPPING(State)HOUSES! • For Ruth • Fred’s Giving Circle • Galvanized Givers Girl and the Gov’s Giving Circle • Green Lake Giving Circle • Hi-Dez Mommas • In response to Roe/Down with Dobbs • Indivisible Euclid Giving Circle • Jane’s Giving Circle • Jennifer’s Giving Circle • JKLJ Giving Circle • Jonathan’s Giving Circle • Josh’s Giving Circle • Kady’s Giving Circle • Karen’s Giving Circle • Kirstin’s Circle Lady Gang • Laura N’s Giving Circle • Legislative Local • Let the Sun Shine In! • Lish’s Giving Circle • Mama Bears Maria & Ellen’s Giving Circle • Marisa’s Giving Circle • Marissa’s Giving Circle • MaryAnne’s Giving Circle Melissa’s Giving Circle • Moms on Overtime for Change • Morgan & Barry’s Giving Circle • Natasha’s Giving Circle Not Impressed • Not Too Late for States • Ohio Women for Blue States • Orange is the New Blue • Orit’s Giving Circle • Our Children Deserve Better • Positive Changemakers • Practical Change • Propeller • Rachel’s Giving Circle • Raise Your Voice • REAL Change Starts With YOU • Rebecca C’s Giving Circle • Rebecca L’s Giving Circle Reclaim Democracy Giving Circle • Reproductive Rights PDX • Rick’s Giving Circle • RKB’s Circle • Roe on TV Ron’s Giving Circle • Ruth’s Giving Circle • San Diegans for Change • Sara’s Giving Circle • Sarah C’s Giving Circle Scheme Against the Patriarchy • Sharon’s Giving Circle • Show Me Democracy • Sister Take My Hand: From Outrage To Action • Sisters Doin It For Themselves • Spring into Action: Reproductive Justice • States Project Giving Circle • States Squad: Strength In Numbers • Sue’s Giving Circle • Support the States 22 Supporting Women • ALL Women • Suzanne’s Giving Circle • Taking Back the Power • Tending To Democracy THE ANTI-GERRYMANDERING CULT • The Dissenters • The Fighting Quakers • The Human Union • The States Project • Malibu • The States Project: Turn Up the Volume • The We Love Maine Giving Circle • Therapists In Action Giving Circle • Time to fight back • Together We Succeed The States Project Missouri • Trying a Thing — Making a Difference • United Flippin States • We are Sick of this Sh!t! • We Are The Change • We the People of Team USA Democracy • We Won’t Go Back • Whitney’s Giving Circle • Wholehearted Leaders for Flipping State Legislatures from Red to Blue
Turning to 2023 and Beyond

Dear Giving Circles,

This cycle, more than 300 Giving Circles powered our work.

Teachers joined us after watching rightwing state lawmakers fail to fund public schools. Parents with hearts shattered after Uvalde committed to supporting state lawmakers who will protect our kids from gun violence. Healthcare workers, when Roe v. Wade fell, who knew that state lawmakers would now decide if they could provide their patients with life-saving care.

You all raised your hands, organized your friends and families, pooled your resources, and drove unprecedented change. And with the governing power you helped build, the state lawmakers we worked to elect will improve lives.

I hope you can see that in every state where we worked in this cycle, we had a meaningful impact. Impact that would have been impossible without you. Thank you for proving that collectively, this is the impact we can achieve together. Thank you for being partners in the fight for our freedoms and our democracy.

Our success in this cycle — the wins we built on ground held from past cycles — has laid the foundation for critical races in 2024.

And I know two things.

First, the challenges our nation faces will not disappear. The work we’re doing together, this tending to democracy, requires us to show up again and again, cycle after cycle, in 2024 and beyond.

Second, this community — this powerful, resilient, and persistent group of Giving Circles — is up for the challenge.

I could not be more grateful for all you do. I look forward to fighting alongside you tomorrow, next year, and beyond.

Onward.

Melissa Walker
Head of Giving Circles