



TO: **Interested Parties**
FROM: **DLCC President Jessica Post**
DATE: **May 5, 2022**
RE: **Path to the Majority**

State legislative politics has long taken a backseat in America's political consciousness. As Republican state lawmakers quickly radicalize and their propensity toward authoritarianism grows, our democracy can no longer afford for that to remain the case.

In 2022 and beyond, state legislative races must be a strategic priority for Democrats. Republicans are in the midst of a nationwide effort to restrict voting and give gerrymandered Republican-controlled legislatures more power over election administration and certification. We already watched Republicans try to overturn a fair and free election and, in some states, they're still trying. In 2022, restricting voting and disputing the 2020 presidential election results has become a litmus test for Republican candidates across the country.

Republicans at the state legislative level may dispute and interfere with fair and free elections that a Democrat wins or in the 2024 presidential race. In building back power at the state legislative level, Democrats will protect the path to the U.S. House, the U.S. Senate, and the presidency.

In the past six years, the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee has worked to reverse Republicans' structural advantages at the state legislative level — and we've made significant progress as a result. This year, we're honing in on the most strategic ways to protect our progress and build a path to future Democratic majorities.

We know that we could be entering a tough political environment, as is historically the case for the president's party during the midterm elections. We have seen what can happen in the states during a Democratic president's tenure. During the last midterm under a new Democratic president, Democrats were caught flat-footed at the state legislative level of the ballot and our chambers took a hard hit. That set us back for the next decade.

Let's be very clear: **we will not be caught off guard this year.** Major political parties have good cycles and bad cycles — neither is exempt from that reality. The DLCC is better resourced than ever to defend our ground during tough cycles and to set ourselves up for success when the winds come our way.

The DLCC has already smashed its own fundraising records — raising a historic \$30 million so far this cycle, our fastest pace ever. We've also started investing in 21 chambers to prepare for the first election on this decade's new maps.

This cycle, we're implementing a three-pronged strategy to protect our gains, mount a competitive challenge to winnable GOP-held majorities, and build strategic power for future cycles. We will continue to adapt as the political environment takes shape over the course of the election cycle, and if chambers begin to look more vulnerable for either party, we will move resources accordingly.

Defend our Majorities

Our first priority this year will be to defend the gains we've made over the last decade. Midterm cycles are historically difficult for the president's party. Winning state legislative majorities in more difficult territory later in the decade starts with defending our progress this cycle.

- **Colorado House & Senate**
- **Maine House & Senate**
- **Minnesota House**
- **Nevada Assembly & Senate**
- **New Mexico House**

Make a Play for Vulnerable GOP Majorities

Republican majorities are the most vulnerable in the Minnesota Senate and both chambers in Michigan and New Hampshire. These chambers are the best opportunities to gain ground due to redistricting, the landscapes of the states, and our current margins.

- **Minnesota Senate**
- **Michigan House & Senate**
- **New Hampshire House & Senate**

Reversing Republicans' Structural Advantage

In 2020 we saw national Democrats win elections in unprecedented territory. It's time to start building towards that at the state legislative level. Redistricting realities, the political environment, and current legislative margins make these chambers more challenging — but make no mistake, they're competitive. We're investing to gain ground and if any of these chambers appear more competitive later in the cycle, we'll make a play for the majority.

- **Arizona House & Senate**
- **Pennsylvania House & Senate**
- **Georgia House**

Beyond our Majorities

We also know that breaking up the GOP's edge, largely built through unrepresentative gerrymandering and restrictive voting laws, isn't easy or glamorous work. Majorities are not made overnight. That work can't stop and start in October of an election year — it will take hard work and significant investments cycle after cycle. Our work to build majorities over the next decade starts now. We'll be looking at states that have diversifying populations to begin investing in strategic levers of power to set ourselves up for success in future cycles. But the Democratic Party's prospects for the next decade depend on us doing the hard work and focusing on how to build power both now and for the next decade.

Protecting Democratic Governors' Veto Power: In past cycles, we've defended Democratic governors' veto powers in states like Wisconsin and North Carolina by preventing Republican supermajorities. As control of governor's mansions changes hands in states across the country, we'll strive to make sure their agendas stick by protecting their vetoes.

Investing in Lieutenant Governor Races and State Supreme Court Seats: Last year, the DLCC began investing in lieutenant governor races where we believed it could impact chamber control — we'll continue that work in 2022 and beyond. And as Republicans continue to target state supreme courts to carry out their dirty work — we'll invest to ensure that the courts remain fair.

Winning Competitive Districts in Tough States: Majorities are made one seat at a time. We'll invest anywhere there's a competitive district to build towards winning more majorities later in the decade.

Building Diverse Coalitions: Winning in the long term requires coalition-building everywhere. When we recruit candidates who reflect the communities they represent, those communities show up at the ballot box. This benefits Democrats up and down the ticket.