



TO: **Interested Parties**
FROM: **Jessica Post**
RE: **How the DLCC Made History**
DATE: **November 21, 2022**

Democrats made history in state legislatures this year — defying the odds, bucking political wisdom, and laying out the blueprint for Democratic wins at the state legislative level.

We fended off big Republican spending to hold Democratic majorities in **Oregon, Maine, Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico**, making this the first midterm year since at least 1934 that the party in power hasn't lost any legislative chambers. We went on to flip the **Minnesota Senate** red to blue, giving us a governing trifecta for the first time in a decade. We also flipped both chambers in **Michigan** — giving Democrats full control for the first time in nearly 40 years.

We notched a historic win in the **Pennsylvania House**, flipping it from red to blue for the first time since 2010. And while results are still out in **New Hampshire**, we know that we'll end with the tightest margins in the House in the modern era if not outright controlling the chamber. This midterm, state legislatures have become the most victorious ballot level this cycle for Democrats, outpacing federal Democratic gains and achieving monumental shifts of power.

These victories were far from a foregone conclusion. Earlier this year, our midterm conditions were shaping up to be eerily similar to 2010: an onslaught of outside conservative funding began flooding the state level to fund scare tactics, lies, and racist ads at the local level.

To defy history, the DLCC doubled down on what we've always done: lay the groundwork to win. Here's how we did it.

Early Money & Smart Targeting

The DLCC released its [Path to The Majority](#) strategy in the spring of 2022. It laid out the states that we believed would be the most competitive of the cycle and where we could best capitalize on the groundwork we had built in prior cycles. We made financial investments in all of our Path to The Majority states by the fall of 2021 and continued spending in 2022 to lay the foundation for victory in November.

The DLCC raised and spent \$50 million this cycle and we are an all of the above committee. We provide funds to campaigns and run significant independent advertising to win races. We also provide data, targeting, training, digital, communications and fundraising support, and strategic expertise to our targeted states every day. Winning state legislatures are not yearly plays — they are multi-cycle plays, and the DLCC remained with our caucuses every step of the way to deliver these stunning results.

The DLCC knows that the Republican playbook every single cycle is to flood money into the states in the election's final weeks. As a result — we remain nimble. In the end, the results show that we were accurately targeting the right locations to create the biggest impact. Republicans spent millions trying to flip our hold targets — and came up empty everywhere. We flipped four targeted chambers from red to blue and stand to potentially gain more. Unlike 2010, because of our victories this cycle, we will be able to stay on offense this decade.

Smart Strategies

At the DLCC, we use our resources strategically to ensure that our state partners are in the best possible position to win. We know that state legislative majorities are won on the margins — every single move matters. Still, an election cycle always brings up unexpected challenges. Seizing every single opportunity to move the needle in our direction amounts to big victories, and we proved that this cycle.

Here are a few key examples:

- › The DLCC organizing team and our state partners made over 20 million calls, texts, and door knock attempts to voters in key districts.
- › Our three-person state finance team helped state partners raise over \$105 million this cycle across all targets.
- › The DLCC helped with a successful legal challenge of gerrymandered maps in **Alaska**.
- › In September, a Democratic incumbent in **Arizona** withdrew from his House race after the primary — the DLCC funded and worked with state partners to support the write-in candidate in winning overwhelmingly.
- › DLCC investments in **New Hampshire** were crucial in helping our state partners manage over a dozen recounts in the country's largest legislative chamber. The margins of these recounts were in the single digits — and Democrats won two and tied another, putting us within striking distance of flipping the chamber.
- › In **Pennsylvania**, the DLCC immediately moved funds post-election day to aid with recounts that ended up putting Democrats over the edge to flip the chamber.
- › In **Nevada**, the DLCC contributed opposition research that led to the creation of a supermajority in the chamber.
- › The DLCC cataloged over 750 Republican candidates who were election deniers or threats to democracy in some capacity for our [Threats to Democracy site](#). This research allowed candidates on the ground to define their opponents and elevated a critical wedge issue, defeating dozens of insurrectionists and election deniers in the end.

These examples are just snapshots of the full breadth of work done by the DLCC every single day to put our candidates in the best position to win.

Laser-Focus On Issues That Mattered

We knew that abortion was going to be a huge factor in this election, and we refused to shy away from that. The DLCC and our candidates understood that the American people wouldn't let their rights be taken away without a fight — and we were right. The DLCC launched its States to Save Roe [site](#) in January. After the Supreme Court allowed Texas' six-week abortion ban to go into effect, we understood that it would only be a matter of time before Roe was overturned. We knew abortion rights would become a key factor in state legislative elections, and we capitalized on this at every turn. Because of our Path to Majority and other victories, more than 60 million Americans will have their reproductive rights protected or expanded thanks to Democratic majorities.

At the same time, our candidates didn't let up on addressing their plans for lowering costs and helping their constituents while articulating just how far the MAGA GOP would go in sabotaging future elections.

The DLCC created and drove the narrative of the existential threat the GOP posed to our democracy. We were the first to call out Republican state legislators who attended the insurrection. We worked to tie all Republicans to these MAGA extremists and started defining now infamous figures like Doug Mastriano on [January 7, 2021](#). We never let up — and protecting democracy has now emerged as one of the key factors in Democrat's victories this cycle.

Building A Playbook For Long Term Power

The DLCC's victories serve as a lesson to Democrats at all levels of the ballot. The value of investing early and trusting and aiding local leaders to deliver a winning strategy created the path to success. The Democratic Party must be built from the ground up, with its foundation in state legislatures. Democratic efforts to control the U.S. House are more difficult **because** of Democrats' failure to invest in state legislatures earlier. Congressional Democrats were running in districts rigged by Republican state legislators in many states. If Democrats want to fight back against the MAGA agenda and make our country better for all Americans, that work must start in state legislatures. The DLCC has built a roadmap to make that happen.