



TO: **Interested Parties**
FROM: **DLCC President Jessica Post**
RE: **2022 Year in Review for
Democratic State Legislatures**
DATE: **December 16, 2022**

The DLCC defied history this cycle, having the best state legislative results of the president's party in power since before 1934, outperforming Democrats at other levels of the ballot and creating the blueprint for how Democrats can build long term power in state legislatures.

In 2022, Democrats were facing historic headwinds. Political prognosticators along with Republican and Democratic operatives alike were predicting that the 2022 midterm cycle would end in a "red tsunami." Needless to say, we stopped that from happening.

All cycle, it was clear that there were two prevailing dynamics: the historical reality that the president's party often fares poorly in midterms and the unpopularity of the MAGA GOP's increasingly radical agenda to ban abortion and attack our democracy. This cycle, we set out to create a national operation that would put state Democrats in the best position possible to defend our majorities and flip GOP majorities if the winds came our way. The results speak for themselves:

- We flipped 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.
- We held Democratic majorities in **Maine**, where the trifecta will continue to deliver for Mainers and protect their fundamental freedoms from MAGA attacks.
- In **Nevada**, not only did Democrats hold both chambers — they actually gained a supermajority in the Assembly, a Republican flip target. These victories occurred despite a loss at the top of the ticket and will provide a critical check on the incoming Republican governor's agenda.
- **Colorado** Democrats held both chambers and even gained a supermajority in the House, putting the GOP in the smallest minority in state history, an [**"extinction-level event"**](#) for Republicans.
- In the **New Mexico House**, Republicans inundated the state with millions but failed to flip the chamber.

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- › Over the summer, Republicans expanded their target map to include flipping **Oregon** and **Washington**, pouring money into the states in an attempt to capitalize on what they expected to be an advantageous cycle. They obviously failed to flip those chambers — or any chambers.

The DLCC has been working toward these victories for years. State legislative majorities are won on the margins, and every single effort and dollar counts in these districts. Thanks to our incredible candidates, staff, volunteers, and forward-thinking strategy, the DLCC — and the country — won big. Here are a few key examples:

- › The DLCC raised **\$50 million** this cycle in its best ever midterm fundraising year.
- › The DLCC team worked tirelessly to build a narrative that elevated the importance of state legislatures and successfully defined Republicans as extremists. The committee solidified this winning narrative in major print outlets, securing stories in the [New York Times](#), [Washington Post](#), [POLITICO](#), and [CBS News](#). The DLCC team also elevated this work and state Democrats through appearances on national televised news slots such as MSNBC and C-SPAN.
- › Our independent expenditure arm did vital work in the states including:
 - › Digital ads, mail, calls, texts, and knocked doors in AAPI and other communities in **Nevada**, resulting in wins in all of the Assembly districts we targeted.
 - › Four weeks of Spanish language radio ads in **Arizona**.
 - › Critical hits against Republican candidates, footage for TV ads, press coverage, as well as direct mail ads in **Colorado**.
 - › A large investment in broadcast TV, full mail and digital plans, and helped manage in-state partner relationships in **Minnesota** — contributing to several critical wins in our target districts.
- › The DLCC organizing team and our state partners made over **20 million** calls, texts, and door knock attempts to voters in key districts.
- › Our four-person state finance team helped state partners raise over **\$105 million** this cycle across all targets.
- › The DLCC helped with a successful legal challenge against 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.

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- › DLCC digital and data teams worked with caucuses directly and supercharged their fundraising efforts. For example, in **Michigan** and in **Minnesota**, the DLCC helped staffers on the ground employ strategies to increase their online fundraising and grow their programs.
- › The DLCC data team developed sophisticated voter databases, like in **North Carolina**, where with the DLCC's assistance, the caucus was able to target key voters and fend off a Republican supermajority to protect abortion rights in the state.
- › In **Pennsylvania**, the DLCC built on its years of investment by immediately moving funds post-Election Day to aid with recounts that put Democrats over the edge to flip the chamber. The DLCC also made investments in **New Hampshire** that were crucial in helping our state partners manage over a dozen recounts in the country's largest legislative chamber. The margins were in the single digits — and it helped put us within striking distance of flipping the chamber in the special elections that will happen through the year.
- › In **Nevada**, the DLCC contributed opposition research that led to the creation of a supermajority in the chamber.
- › In key caucuses across the country, the DLCC offered vital press and communication support including rapid response, communications plans, earned media pitching, and much more.
- › 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 snapshots of the full breadth of work done by the DLCC to put our candidates in the best position to win. The DLCC is an all of the above committee, providing funds for the full scope of campaign work and running significant independent advertising to win races. The data, targeting, organizing, digital, communications and fundraising support, and strategic expertise we provide to targeted states is invaluable. Winning state legislatures doesn't happen in a single election — they are multi-cycle plays, and the DLCC's work with our caucuses helped deliver these stunning results this year and laid the groundwork for future Democratic wins.

The consequences of our victories cannot be overstated. Here is a brief overview of how these wins will impact millions of Americans and their families:

- › **Protecting and expanding reproductive rights:** Because of our [Path to Majority victories](#), nearly 64 million people will have their reproductive rights protected or expanded thanks to legislative Democrats. Now, nearly 165 million Americans will live in states where abortion rights are protected because of Democratic legislatures or Democrats' ability to uphold vetoes.

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- **Defending democracy at every level of the ballot:** Our victories also mean dozens of Republicans that posed existential threats to democracy were defeated, including 13 insurrectionists. For every election denier that ran in a statewide election, there were a dozen more running at our level of the ballot, and the DLCC has been tracking them since January 6th. The DLCC's strategy also protected the path to the presidency and Democrats now control states overseeing nearly 270 electoral votes.
- **Helping working families make ends meet:** Whether it's lowering energy costs in Maine, helping small business owners in Nevada, expanding affordable housing in Colorado, or raising the minimum wage in New Mexico, Democrats have proven that we make life better for working families when we have power. Democratic legislatures all across the country worked to lower health care costs, increase access to affordable childcare, and implement paid leave. These majorities are vital for helping Americans put food on the table.
- **Fighting for a sustainable future:** Democrats in statehouses are taking bold action on climate change, while building a prosperous economy for everyone. Thanks to the Democratic majorities we defended and expanded this cycle, we can now build on the progress we have already made and ensure that future generations have the opportunity to thrive.

It is more clear than ever that state legislatures have the biggest impact on the day-to-day lives of Americans. The DLCC is on the frontlines of building Democratic infrastructure in the states, and we know all too well the threat that Republicans pose in cycles to come. At the state legislative level of the ballot, we broke new ground — but we were still largely ignored by the Democratic Party apparatus. This must change. Through our strategy, the DLCC has written the blueprint for how to win elections at the local level, and we cannot wait to take on the Virginia GOP in 2023 and expand our majorities in 2024 and beyond.