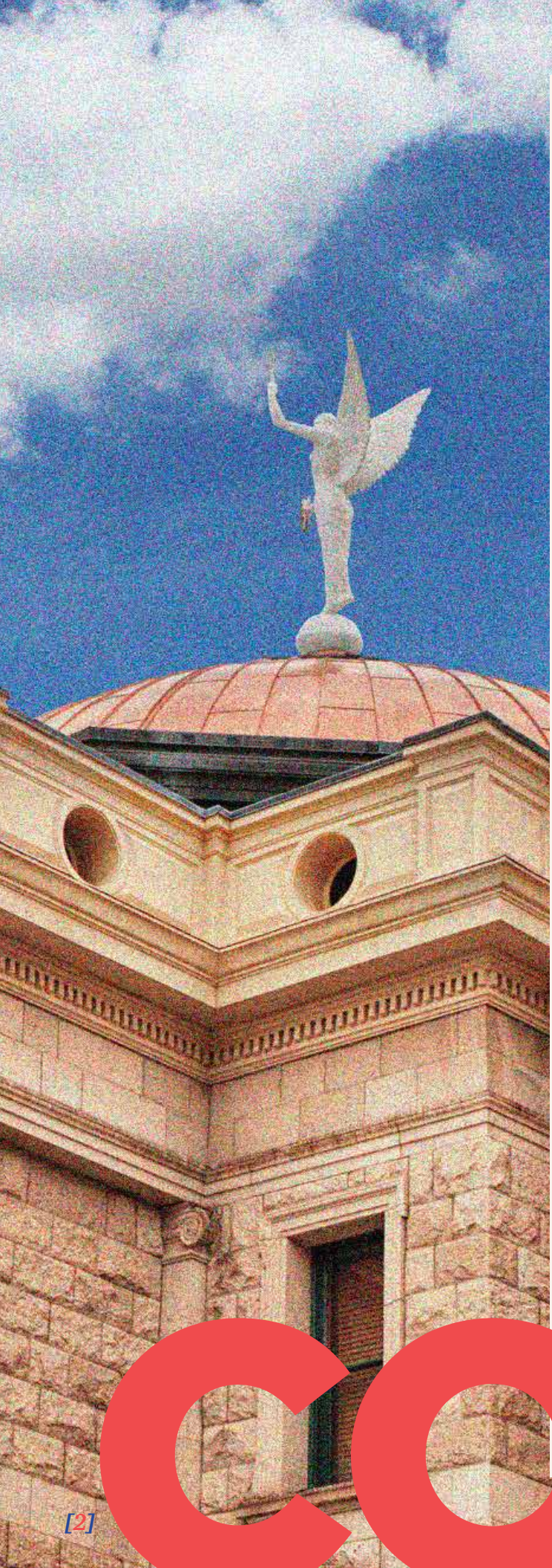


**DLCC** 



# **IMPACT REPORT: 2024**



# 2024 IMPACT REPORT

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SECTION I  
**INTRODUCTION**



## A Note From DLCC President Heather Williams

To our friends, allies, and community –

This was an election like none other. The Democratic nominee for president changed just 107 days out from the election, and despite more money and attention than ever flooding federal races, we still saw one of the most shocking election results in modern history. However, at our ballot level, the story was remarkably different. In state legislatures, we overcame this cycle's red wave and emerged with victories to celebrate. As we prepare for one of the biggest fights of our lifetime under a second Trump presidency, there are lessons we can learn from this ballot level as we chart our path forward.

**Right now, state legislatures are the only level of the ballot where Democratic power is on the rise.** We hold significantly more majorities in our statehouses than the last time Donald Trump took office, and the strength of this firewall in our state legislatures has never been more important. Democrats in state legislatures will remain on the frontlines of deciding and protecting the future of economic opportunity, education, immigration, the climate crisis, fundamental freedoms, and so much more.

For all the attention on Project 2025 in this election, our state legislators know these dangerous MAGA policies have been working their way through Republican-led statehouses for years. The connection between the policy crafted in the laboratory of state legislatures and the Trump agenda now unfolding in Washington has never been more stark or more dangerous.

At the Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee, our sole mission and deep belief in the importance of our ballot level for shaping the future of our party and country remains as strong as ever. We will continue to be a permanent, year-round presence in the states, driving resources to our candidates, and leading a clear, data-driven, and battle-tested strategy to defend and grow Democratic power.

Despite the many challenges ahead, I remain hopeful about our collective future because our in-state partners, community of supporters, and skilled staff reached record levels of support this year and put Democrats in state legislatures in the best possible position in these uncertain times.

This community will make our collective mission and future victories possible as we rise to meet this moment and ensure our legislators and candidates have the support they need to defend and fight for our communities and for our values. The future of our country depends on our shared effort like never before.



HEATHER WILLIAMS,  
DLCC President

# THE DLCC MISSION 01

## The DLCC's sole mission is building Democratic power in state legislatures through elections and setting the national Democratic agenda at the state level.

- As the party committee focused on this ballot level, we craft the national electoral strategy and battleground map for state legislatures and are the permanent, year-round presence and strategic hub for winning state elections.
- We have three decades of experience working across all 50 states and have both the data and the tools to identify the best opportunities every cycle.
- Our sole focus is to build power – starting in the current election cycle, with an eye on the effects through the decade, and beyond.
- Winning elections at this ballot level is the catalyst for change, representative leadership, and the transformative policy outcomes that most impact our day-to-day lives..

From protecting fundamental freedoms and voting rights to growing the middle class and investing in our communities, the DLCC and state legislators are moving the Democratic agenda forward and shaping the future of this country.

## BUILDING ON A DECADE OF PROGRESS

### State legislatures set the foundation of political power in this country, one decade at a time.

**W**hen Republicans won wave elections in 2010 and 2014, they took control of an unprecedented number of state legislatures and used their power to pass restrictive voting laws and gerrymander their way into majorities – not just in the states, but also in the U.S. Congress.

By 2016, the consequences were clear: as Donald Trump was elected President, Republicans held both houses of Congress, were in the process of packing the Supreme Court, and held unprecedented control of 70 state legislative chambers, including more than 20 governing trifectas.

Republicans' historic investments in this ballot level were so effective that they were even dangerously close to having enough power in state legislatures to call an Article V constitutional convention – which would allow for amendments to our nation's Constitution to be ratified by our state legislatures.

Fortunately, near the end of the decade, the first Trump presidency became a rallying cry for Democrats. The cruelty and chaos of the new administration led millions to get involved and push for change. At the DLCC, our movement grew at an unprecedented rate and our strategy to win back power at the state level and reclaim our future surged forward. We began to rebuild what had been lost and put Democrats back in power across the country.

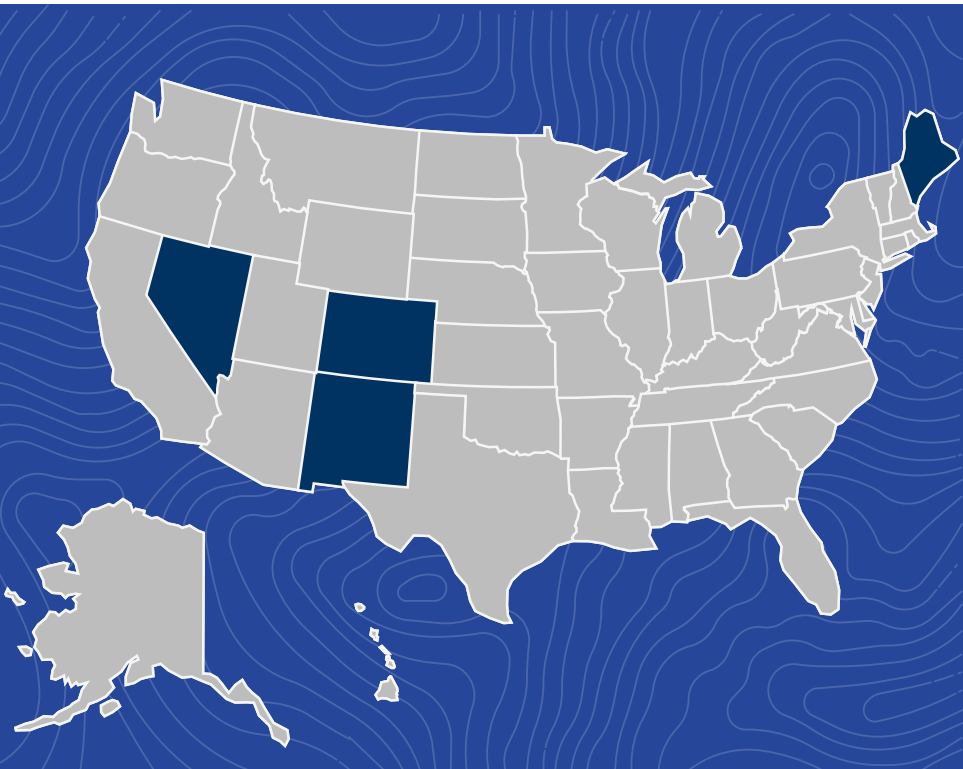
We fought hard in 2018 and 2020 to make sure Democrats were in a stronger position going into the new decade. We secured a net gain of nine chambers by the end of the decade thanks to targeted victories in more than 100 key seats in the most competitive chambers. Our strategy to craft the game plan, build infrastructure, and bring attention and resources to this ballot level fueled these victories and changed the trajectory of the country by setting a stronger foundation for Democrats in the states.



# Expanding our Foundation of Power

Ahead of the turn of the decade, the DLCC focused our strategy on building durable majorities in true battlegrounds – states where Democrats have an advantage in favorable years but can see majorities slip away when the environment is challenging or resources fail to materialize.

The DLCC’s emphasis on strong infrastructure, data-guided programs, and year-round support for political operations is critical to maintain Democratic gains and avoid cycles of losing and rebuilding majorities.



Only a decade ago, Republicans held statehouse majorities in blue states like Colorado, Maine, New Mexico, and Nevada. However, the DLCC invested in infrastructure and channeled resources to ultimately reclaim and sustain reliable majorities in these states.

Between 2014 and 2024, the DLCC grew the number of Democratic state lawmakers in these states by an average of 25 percent and built the infrastructure to ensure these majorities can withstand tough election years.

The durability of our majorities in Colorado, Maine, New Mexico, and Nevada was on full display in 2024 too. Despite Republican spending and targeting in several of these chambers, **we held our Democratic majorities in every single one** – even as these states shifted right and Nevada even ultimately went for Trump at the top of the ticket.



## Colorado

2.5 pt. top of ticket swing in 2024  
Dem Majorities Retained ✓✓



## Nevada

5.5 pt. top of ticket swing in 2024  
Dem Majorities Retained ✓✓



## Maine

1.9 pt. top of ticket swing in 2024  
Dem Majorities Retained ✓✓

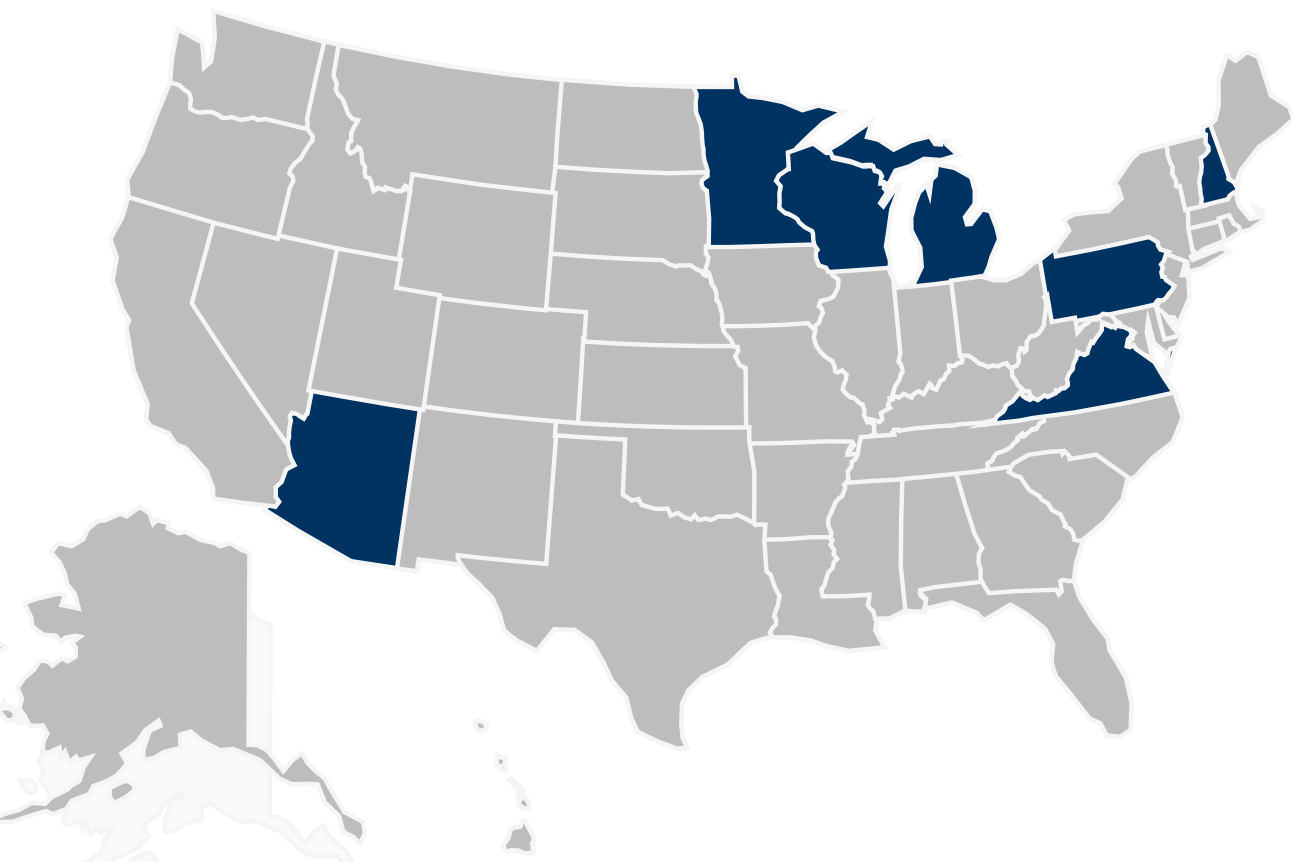


## New Mexico

4.8 pt. top of ticket swing in 2024  
Dem Majorities Retained ✓✓

## Setting The New Frontline

**S**ince redistricting in 2020, we have been focused on an extremely competitive map where multiple states have majorities with slim margins or with clear multi-cycle paths for Democrats to gain power. We made substantial gains in the first midterms of the decade and notched further wins in the more challenging environment in 2024. Throughout, the states on the target map we have set have remained consistent as our data has shown a clear picture of where Democrats are within reach of new majorities. **This current map will likely be the frontline for Democrats through the end of the decade for protecting freedoms and our democracy:**



The target map we set each cycle is what other groups in our space, including the national Democratic party infrastructure, mobilize around. We have already made tremendous progress on this map for the future we hope to build. A decade ago, the Minnesota Senate was the only Democratic majority among the seven states on our map. Today, thanks to our gains and flips in nearly 100 targeted districts, we have picked up four more majorities and put several more in play for the second half of the decade.

**The Washington Post**

**Democrats surged to flip state legislatures, defying past GOP gains**

**The Guardian**

**Democrats gain control of Virginia state legislature in blow to Republican plans**

**GOERIE**

**Pennsylvania Democrats retain state House majority, holding off red wave**

**©CBS NEWS**

**Democrats defend every state legislative chamber in their control this year**

**Over the past decade, we have expanded the number of Democratic lawmakers in the states on our current map by an average of 15 percent. Our work isn't done, but as we approach the uncertain times ahead, the map of opportunities is clear: Democrats must focus our resources on the best opportunities to put Democrats in the strongest possible position to avoid a total Republican takeover by 2030.**

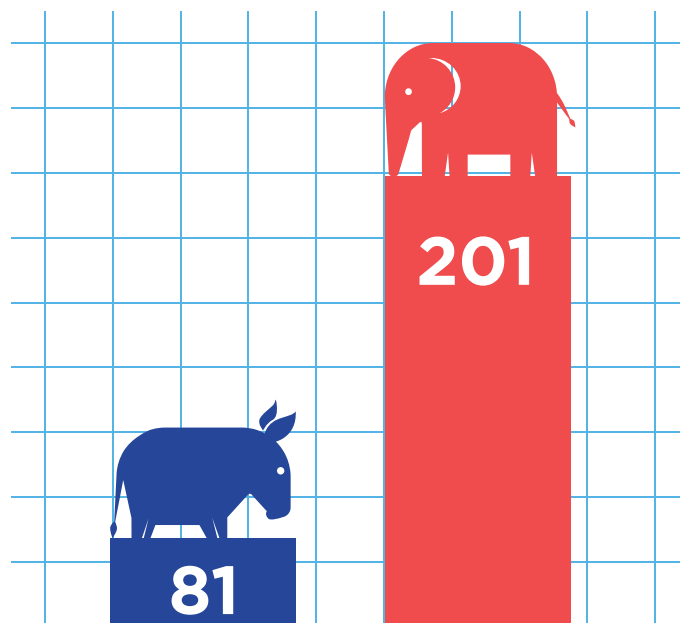
# THE 2030 STRATEGY

In 2030, redistricting will shape what the next decade in this country will look like. We know Republicans are already moving to cement their power for a generation with gerrymandering, not only in our statehouses, but for the U.S. House of Representatives as well. We must confront and reverse their headstart by supporting down-ballot Democrats to avoid a total Republican takeover in 2030.

**By 2030, we can put Democrats in a long-term, sustainable position of power by investing in state legislatures.**

Gerrymandering and entrenched Republican power in the states is one of the biggest obstacles to the Democratic agenda in this country. The power we build in the states between now and 2030 will determine if we can reverse the current trend of Republican control.

**REDISTRICTING:**  
Republicans currently control redistricting for more than twice the number of congressional districts, enough to tip the majority in the U.S. House.

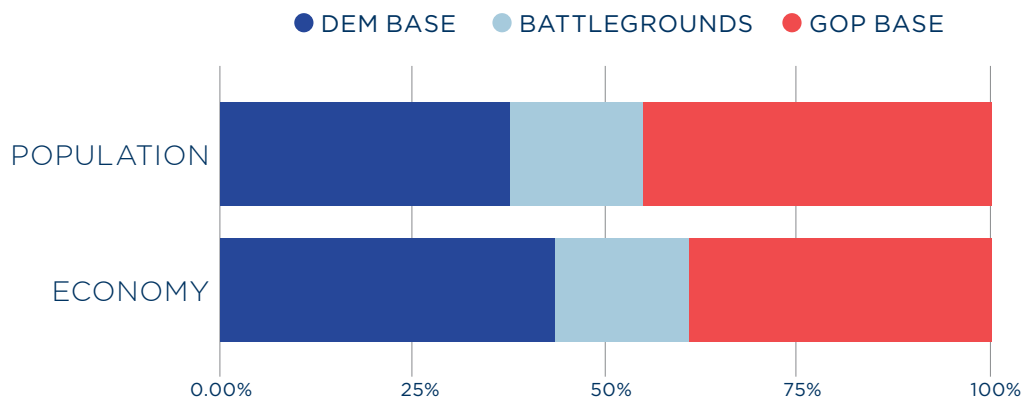


Over the last decade, the DLCC has won back a dozen legislative majorities, and as we look ahead to the next decade and redistricting, our strategy focuses resources where we can secure the most power at this ballot level by 2030.



The future we can win is clear: securing the DLCC’s battlegrounds by the end of the decade would put Democrats in charge of more than half the country’s economy and more than half the population, providing a powerful foundation in the states for the Democratic Party’s values and priorities. Solid Democratic power in the states can be the catalyst for transformative policies that move our country forward, despite gridlock or dysfunction happening in Washington, D.C.

**This ballot level is furthest from the problems in today’s politics and closest to the solutions.**



## Funding this Ballot Level

This is the one ballot level where Democratic power is on the rise – powered by our growing resources and ability to coordinate Democrats’ collective efforts at this ballot level. Over the past several cycles, as we have expanded our power in the states, the DLCC has also increased our organizational capacity and set new fundraising records for the committee, while also playing an essential role in helping our target chambers reach their own fundraising records. Together, we must overcome the historical Republican commitment to this ballot level and moving their agenda through the states.

Since the 2018 election, the DLCC alone has raised more than \$150 million to fund Democrats’ strategy at this ballot level, fueling remarkable progress in securing and defending progress in the states. In the same time period, the Republican State Leadership Committee (RSLC), our Republican counterpart, has raised at least \$250 million.

## Recent Non-Competitive U.S. Senate Races

2020

**South Carolina:**  
\$130 Million raised  
Dems lost by 10.27%

**Kentucky:**  
\$94 Million raised  
Dems lost by 19.53%

2022

**Florida:**  
\$79 Million spent  
Dems lost by 16.41%

2024


**Texas:**  
\$92 Million raised  
Dems lost by 8.6%

**Florida:**  
\$36 Million raised  
Dems lost by 12.8%

Every cycle, hundreds of millions of dollars pour into long-shot U.S. Senate races that could more than double the budget for this ballot level and transform the balance of power in the states. Whereas these recent U.S. Senate races never had a data-supported path to victory, every cycle, Democrats have prioritized these races while leaving critical races underfunded in the states.

A fraction of these millions of dollars could fuel transformative change in the states. State legislative chambers are often won on tight margins and by a handful of votes, and an influx of resources could spell the difference in fueling victory and protecting rights for tens of millions of Americans and the future of our democracy.





# SECTION II ELECTION OUTCOMES

## Stopping A Red Wave in the States

This election year was like nothing we have ever seen. The DLCC's strategy was tested by unprecedented challenges as the twists and turns of the presidential race interrupted fundraising and voter communication and challenged conventional wisdom at multiple junctures.

Ultimately, we proved our theory that building durable power in the states is critical for the long-term success of our party. State Democratic power weathered a tough cycle and is now a critical bulwark against the extreme Republican policy agenda to come.

**There could have been a red wave in state legislatures this year, but consequentially, there was not.**

Instead, the DLCC and state legislative Democrats held our ground or mitigated further losses. We scored important wins across the map and minimized Republican gains. We held majorities, flipped seats, and defended incumbents in a tough political environment even as the national picture on Election Night turned grim.

Even where Republicans made gains, we maintained close margins and kept Democrats in a competitive posture for the next cycle.

**Democrats held their ground or gained seats in at least 46 chambers on election night; whereas Republicans gained seats in 39 chambers at most, despite a favorable environment.**

Our stories of success and impact this year show the difference that our strategy and tactics made. From planning to execution, the collective effort in the states this year showed our power and the possibilities when Democrats make state legislatures a cornerstone of the party's strategy, especially in a tough environment.

# Overperforming the Top of the Ticket

Our ballot level is rich in data that sheds light on voter behavior and preferences – including results from thousands of districts, millions of instances of direct voter contact between our candidates and voters, and data that reaches beyond presidential battlegrounds. As the party committee for this ballot level, the DLCC does not rush analysis or focus on making headlines. Instead, we conduct initial analysis while also waiting to assemble the full datasets and crunch the numbers to ensure we can see the complete picture before applying those insights to our work – ultimately this comprehensive approach sets a stronger strategy for the Democratic Party and our partners as a whole.

Our full analysis of voter files and certified results won't be complete until early 2025 when complete precinct-level and individual voting data become available in all states, but it is already clear with the data we have so far that there was a shift this cycle with state

legislative candidates performing much better in this presidential cycle than in the past.

In 2020, the average contested state legislative district in target chambers underperformed the top of the ticket by 2.09 percentage points, which is why state legislative Democrats had a net loss of two chambers and more than 100 seats, even as Joe Biden won the race for the White House.

After a concerted effort to hone our strategy and focus on the strongest tactics for down-ballot candidates, we closed the gap this year. In every targeted chamber we have data for so far, state legislative Democrats in targeted districts performed better relative to the top of the ticket than the average state legislative Democrat in 2020. In some states, state legislative candidates outright overperformed our counterparts up-ticket, a major shift from 2020.

Chamber	Avg. District Underperformance in 2020	Avg. Target District Performance in 2024	Legislative Performance Change between 2020 and 2024
PA House	-1.17%	+3.44%	+4.61%
PA Senate	-2.70%	+0.47%	+3.17%
NH Senate	-3.91%	-2.00%	+1.91%
AZ Senate	-1.60%	+0.23%	+1.83%
MI House	-1.05%	+0.45%	+1.50%
MN House	-2.15%	-2.01%	+0.14%

Source: DLCC internal data on unofficial results for 2024 targeted races, subject to changes as election results are certified.

# Our State Legislative Strategy focused on the right places

The other initial learnings from our election data so far reinforce the DLCC's targeting strategy that anticipated a tough environment for Democrats this cycle and stayed focused on the races and chambers where data supported paths to victory and competitive races that could be won. We did not spend or drive resources to long-shot races or chambers, and by setting a disciplined map for our partners, we made sure that collective resources were spent efficiently and with the greatest impact as well.

Every Democratic majority we identified as a priority for defense and every GOP majority we targeted on offense proved to be extremely competitive this cycle. We correctly identified power-building opportunities in several states to lay the groundwork for future majorities and we focused on where supermajorities were limiting Democratic governors' veto powers and real implications for governing power.

We credit our wins this cycle to strategic use of collective resources focused on the best opportunities and most competitive chambers where our work could truly make a difference in protecting or expanding Democratic power.

## Victories Across the Map

**WE ENDED THE 2023-24 CYCLE WITH AT LEAST 39 STATE LEGISLATIVE MAJORITIES.**

Democrats are now in a stronger position in the states than we were following the last two presidential elections in 2016 and 2020. Democratic leadership in our state legislatures has never been more important as we face the consequences of a second Trump administration.

Even in states where Republicans had an edge this cycle, we successfully fought to a draw or kept chamber margins close, putting us in a stronger position to go back on offense in as many places as possible in 2025-26.



## MAKING & DEFENDING MAJORITIES:

We had 10 states on our target map this cycle, and we scored important wins in many of them:

### VIRGINIA:

We flipped the first chamber of the cycle in 2023 when we won a majority in the Virginia House of Delegates and held our majority in the Virginia Senate.



### PENNSYLVANIA:

We successfully held our ground in Pennsylvania, defending our single-seat majority in the House and preventing any GOP gains in the Senate, even as Republicans swept statewide races and the presidency.



Photo by: John Ruckosky/The Tribune

### MINNESOTA:

We mobilized quickly to ensure Democrats won a majority-deciding special election in the Senate due to an unscheduled vacancy, and although Republicans made aggressive plays to gain seats in the House, we cut off their path to a majority, ensuring a tied chamber.



## BUILDING POWER:

### WISCONSIN:

We competed in every corner of the state on new maps and made the biggest gains in the state in over a decade, defending the Democratic governor's veto and putting majorities for both chambers in play for 2026. We picked up ten seats in the Assembly and won every single target district to gain four seats in the Senate.

**AP**

**New maps help Wisconsin Democrats make legislative gains and set up a push for majorities in 2026**



### NORTH CAROLINA:

Despite running on some of the most gerrymandered maps in the country, we successfully broke the toxic supermajority in the North Carolina legislature to ensure that incoming Democratic Governor Josh Stein will have the veto pen to stop Republicans' extreme policies.

### GEORGIA:

For the fifth consecutive election cycle, Democrats are projecting a gain in seats in the Georgia House, putting Democrats in their strongest position in this chamber since 2004 – the latest milestone in our effort to chip away at entrenched, gerrymandered GOP power.

**GEORGIA RECORDER**

**National Democratic party unveils plan to loosen the GOP's strong grip on the Georgia Legislature**



## KEEPING CHAMBERS COMPETITIVE FOR 2026

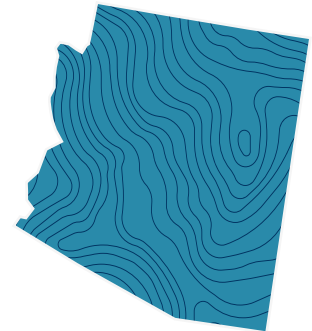


### MICHIGAN:

Republicans were successful in flipping the 1-seat Democratic majority in the Michigan House back in their favor. But make no mistake, just 5,700 votes made the difference in this chamber, and our planning and groundwork to win it back in 2026 are already underway. Democrats' trajectory in Michigan over the decade is still strong and we are ready to get back in the fight.

### ARIZONA:

We minimized Republican gains, protecting almost every single incumbent across our two chambers and even flipping a district in the House. Arizona's unique maps and nested districts have proven challenging but we believe the majorities in both chambers will remain competitive in the new cycle.

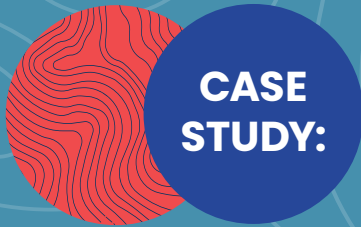
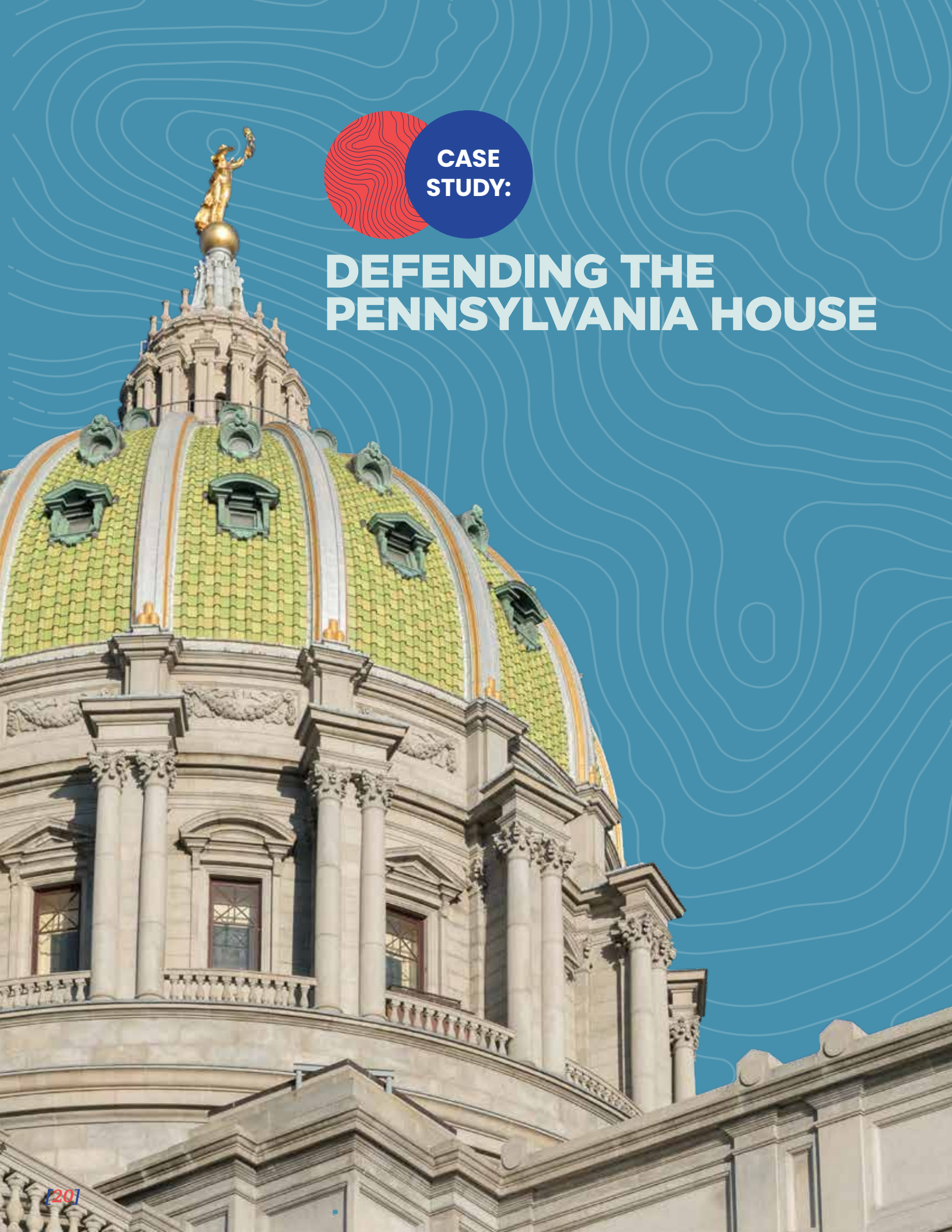


### NEW HAMPSHIRE:

The 400-seat New Hampshire House is the nation's largest state legislative chamber and especially prone to large swings. In 2020, Democrats lost nearly 50 seats in this chamber, despite a national environment that favored Democrats in the presidential election. This year, we kept our net loss of seats to half that, keeping Democrats at 178 seats. This chamber will be ready for gains in a more favorable midterm year and we could even be within striking range of a new majority in 2026.







**CASE  
STUDY:**

# **DEFENDING THE PENNSYLVANIA HOUSE**

In one of the most competitive state legislatures in the country, the DLCC and Pennsylvania House Democrats scored one of the biggest victories of the election by defending the single-seat majority in the Pennsylvania House. Both sides put millions into the fight for this majority, and at the end of the day, Republicans failed to pick up a single seat.

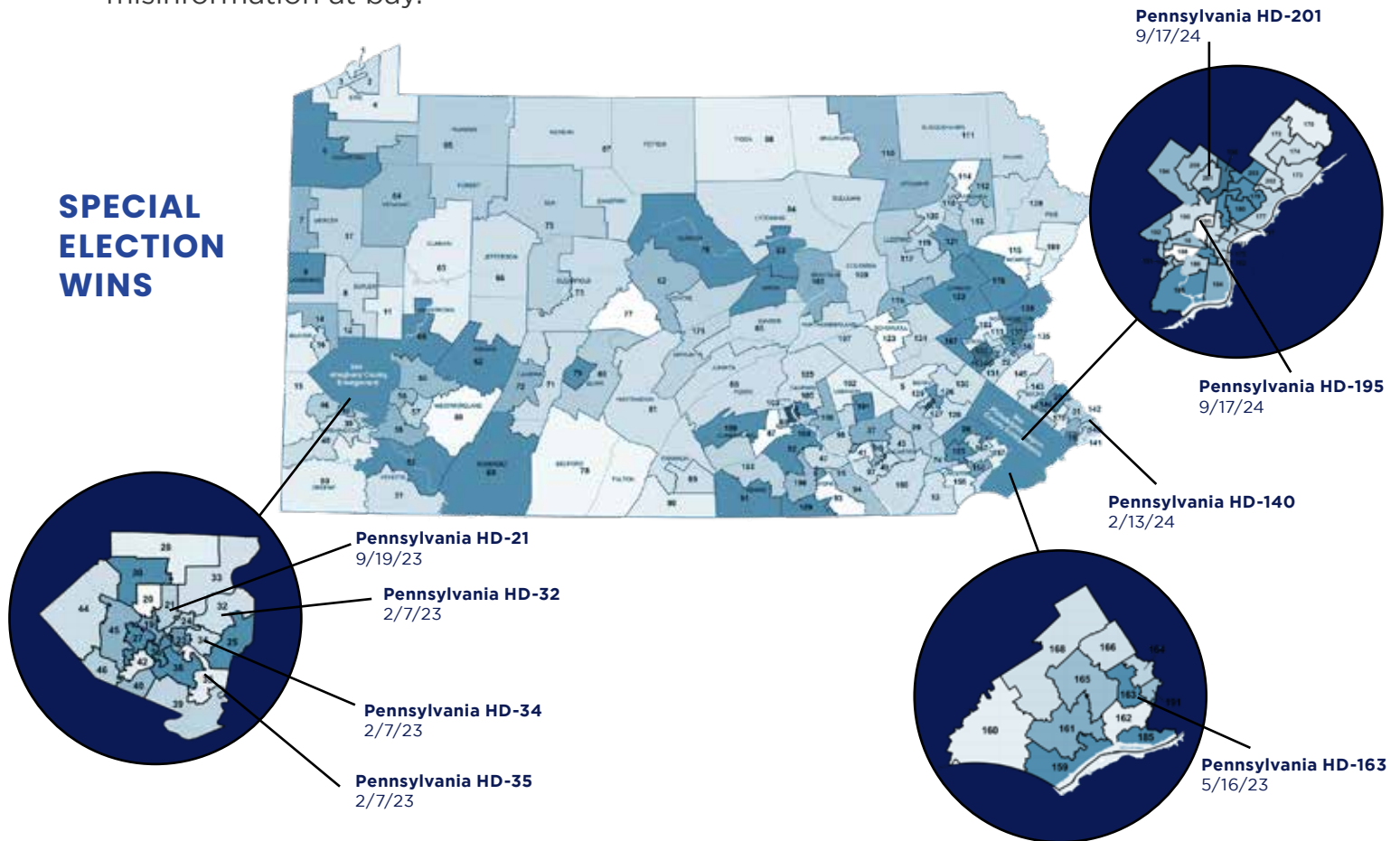
Building and defending the Democratic majority has been a decade-long effort that has included our work to secure fairer maps and protect the Democratic majority on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. Defending the majority in the State House was a top priority this year, and we made history with this being the first time that Democrats have successfully defended a majority in Pennsylvania since 2008.

**HISTORY OF DEMOCRATIC SEATS IN THE CHAMBER:**

2016	2018	2020	2022	2024
82 Seats	93 Seats	90 Seats	102 Seats	102 Seats

Over the course of the 2023-24 cycle, the DLCC was a year-round partner, including winning eight special elections that threatened this one-seat majority. Preparing for November, we helped Pennsylvania Democrats raise unprecedented resources and build strong campaigns to keep Republican spending and misinformation at bay.

**SPECIAL ELECTION WINS**



## CLOSE MARGINS IN OUR TARGETED RACES

This majority came down to a single seat, and many of our targeted races and Spotlight candidates made the difference in this consequential chamber. Along with our staff and infrastructure support, we made a direct investment of more than \$3.5 million in this chamber, including IE programming targeting twelve districts to help secure this majority.

## THE MARGIN OF VICTORY FOR TWO OF DLCC'S SPOTLIGHT CANDIDATES WAS UNDER 2,000 VOTES:



**REP. BRIAN MUNROE:**  
**1,066 VOTES**



**REP. ROBERT MATZIE:**  
**1,608 VOTES**


Pennsylvania will undoubtedly remain competitive in the cycle ahead. Democrats will retain the Speaker's gavel in the House, giving them the power to keep the Republican-controlled Senate in check and work with Governor Josh Shapiro to fight on behalf of the commonwealth.

We are ready to defend this majority in special elections and are already actively laying the groundwork to ensure Democrats continue building power in 2026.



**CASE  
STUDY:**

# MAKING GAINS IN WISCONSIN



**W**isconsin became one of the most promising opportunities for Democrats this cycle after new and fairer district maps were put in place, changing the calculus in both chambers of the legislature. While our data showed we were unlikely to flip either chamber this cycle (especially with only half of the seats in the Wisconsin Senate on the ballot), we set aggressive goals to compete across the state and maximize our gains this cycle – with the ultimate goal to put majorities in both chambers within reach for 2026.

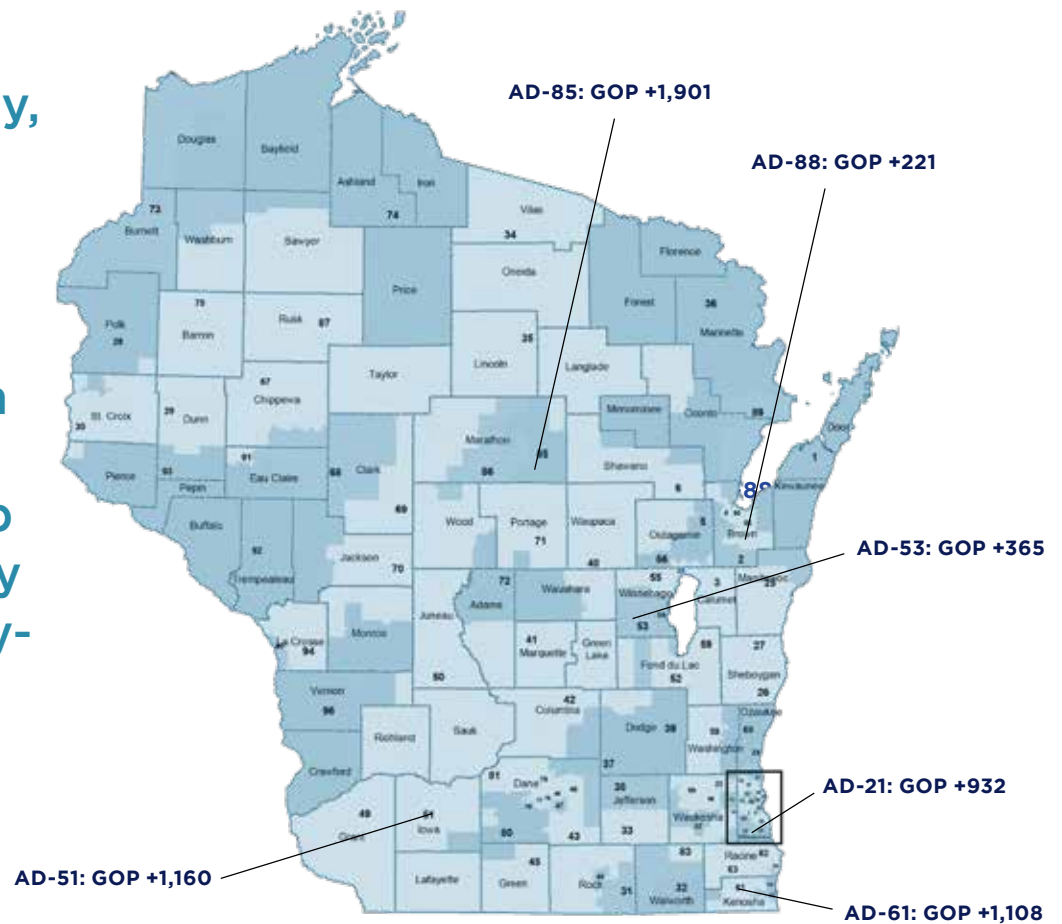
On Election Night, the DLCC and our in-state partners delivered decisive wins. We picked up 10 seats in the Assembly and swept our targets to gain 4 seats in the Senate, securing protections for the Democratic governor’s veto by wide margins and marking the biggest shift in state politics in Wisconsin since 2010.

**Six new LGBTQ+ state legislators were elected – creating the largest group of LGBTQ+ state legislators in Wisconsin’s history.**

An early ground game was critical in Wisconsin this year to ensure that candidate recruitment and infrastructure were ready to support an all-out effort to reverse the effects of longstanding gerrymandering. Democrats recruited candidates in every Senate seat on the ballot for the first time in more than 20 years, as well as 97 of 99 Assembly seats, making sure that Democrats had candidates competing in every corner of the state.

The DLCC was a year-round partner to our allies on the ground as they executed strong programs, raised unprecedented resources, and campaigned in a crowded environment. Even as Republicans poured millions of dollars into Wisconsin to try to cling to their power, the DLCC's strategy and focus along with our partners and allies carried the day.

**In the Assembly, there were six GOP districts decided by fewer than 2,000 votes. In 2026, we have a chance to flip the chamber by winning closely-decided seats like these.**



New maps and Democratic victories in Wisconsin this year are crucial milestones in the DLCC's long-term strategy to shift the balance of power. In 2026, the other half of the state Senate and the full Assembly will be on the ballot, and our dramatic gains this cycle put us in a strong position to push for majorities in both chambers.



CASE STUDY:




# BREAKING THE NORTH CAROLINA SUPERMAJORITY

In one of the highest-profile battlegrounds of the cycle, the DLCC and our partners gained enough seats to break the Republican supermajority in North Carolina, even as the state went for Donald Trump.

In the last legislative session, Republicans used their single-seat supermajorities in both chambers to go on a cruel streak of veto overrides to undermine fundamental freedoms and preserve their own power.

## THE DIFFERENCE ONE SEAT CAN MAKE

Over the last cycle, the GOP used their supermajorities to override vetoes and advance an extreme agenda including:

-  Prioritizing a statewide abortion ban
-  Enacting new voter suppression and gerrymandering
-  Advancing attacks on the LGBTQ+ community

With the consequential wins this year, Democrats in the North Carolina legislature will now have the power to protect the veto power for Democratic Governor-elect Josh Stein – ending Republicans’ unchecked power.

## COMPETING ALL ACROSS THE STATE

In the face of the nation’s most aggressive Republican gerrymander, Democrats recruited strong candidates to run in all 50 Senate races and all but one House race. The DLCC highlighted 14 Spotlight candidates with promising campaigns all across the state, including the two House races where Democrats flipped districts and broke the supermajority by defeating incumbent Republicans. We worked closely with these candidates to build strong campaigns and capitalize on a toxic GOP gubernatorial candidate in the closing weeks to improve our odds.



The New York Times

In North Carolina, the Math for a Supermajority May Come Down to One

**NOTUS**

This North Carolina Race Could End the GOP’s State Legislature Supermajority

THE 19th

In North Carolina, the future of abortion could come down to a few hundred votes



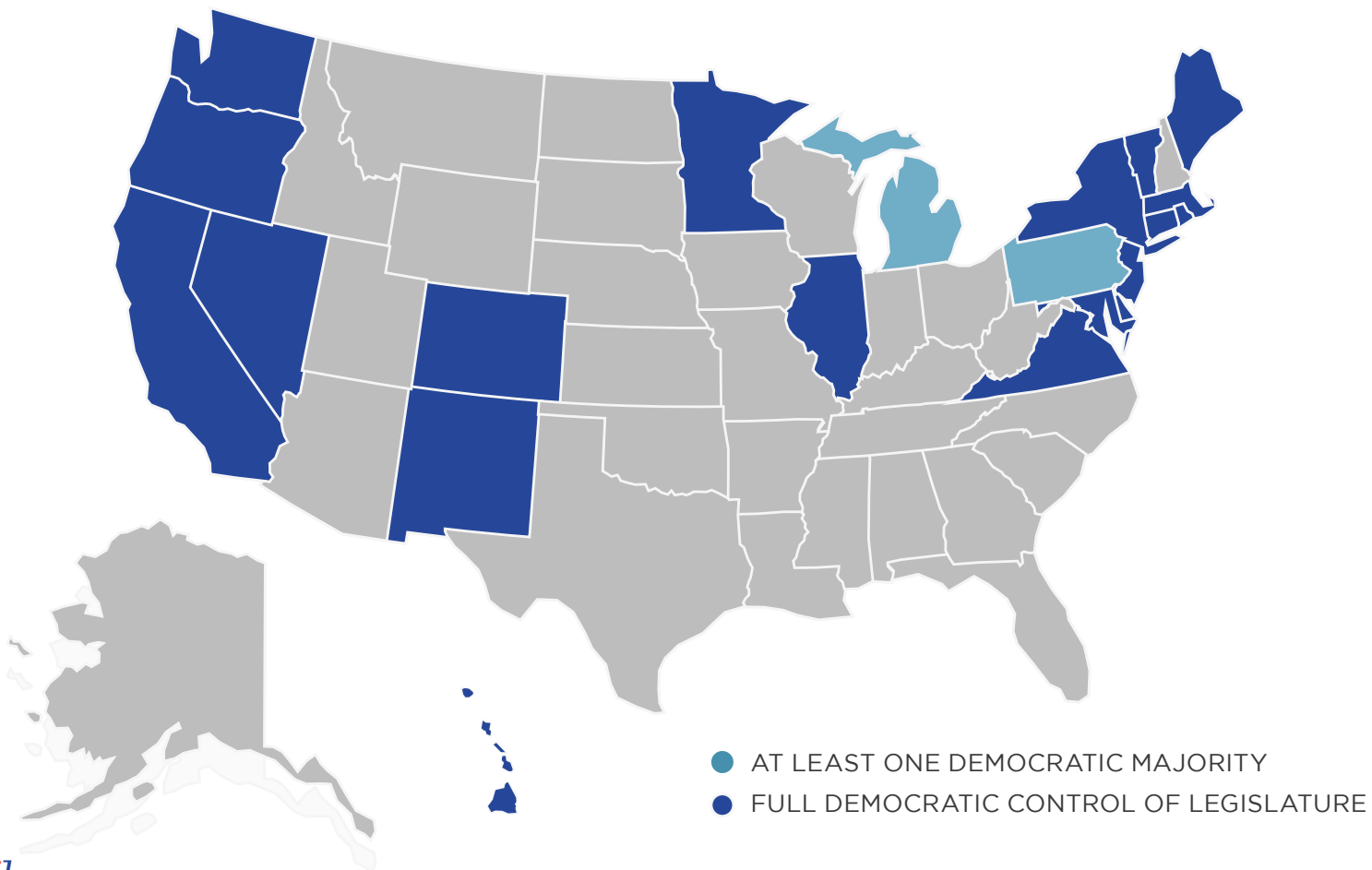
# POLICY IMPACT OF STATE LEGISLATIVE WINS

There is no doubt that Republican wins at the top of the ticket this year will imperil everything from the strength of the middle class to our many rights and freedoms. However, the story in the states is one of hope.

**For every dangerous and extreme policy advanced at the federal level, there is a powerful counterweight and antidote in the states.**

Coming into this election, **160 million Americans - nearly half the country - had their rights and futures protected by at least one Democratic majority in their statehouse.** Thanks to our hard-fought victories, that number has not changed.

Democratic majorities in our state legislatures will also continue to oversee and set policy for nearly 50% of the country's economy, with the power to improve affordability for millions of Americans and invest in growing the middle class.



# The map of where Democrats hold state legislative power is also where some of the biggest policy wins for the Democratic Party in recent years can be found.

## ECONOMIC POLICY HIGHLIGHTS

- ***Saving Families Money.*** Democratic legislatures passed no-cost school meal programs in several states, saving families as much as \$850 per child. Numerous Democratic-led states passed billions in historic tax cuts and measures to rapidly expand affordable housing and tenants' rights.
- ***Creating Good-Paying Jobs.*** Legislative Democrats expanded job training programs, equipping residents with skills that lead to good-paying jobs in states like Colorado, Michigan, and New Mexico. State Democrats also took bold steps to create good-paying jobs that boost the growth of clean energy and manufacturing opportunities.

## CLIMATE WINS

- ***Reducing Emissions.*** After Trump's withdrawal from the Paris Climate Accords during his first term, Democrats in states like Nevada, Maine, and Colorado passed laws to achieve net zero carbon emissions to tackle climate change.
- ***Money-Saving Green Investments.*** With state Democrats at the forefront of the climate crisis, states like Michigan and California passed laws to lower the cost of energy bills through energy efficient upgrades.

## REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

- ***Reducing Emissions.*** Democratic legislatures in states like Minnesota, Maine, and Colorado codified the right to abortion and reproductive health care. Michigan took the extra step to repeal a century-old defunct abortion ban to ensure no future courts could reinterpret the archaic law. States like Nevada removed outdated barriers to reproductive care.
- ***Safeguarding Against MAGA Republican Attacks on Abortion.*** Democratic legislatures in Maine, Illinois, and California passed shield laws to protect out-of-state patients seeking reproductive care, which included efforts to block federal and red state attempts to investigate people's health care decisions.



## LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

- ***Fighting Discrimination.*** State Democrats in Michigan, Virginia, New York, and more have passed laws to protect LGBTQ+ individuals from discrimination in public life. Colorado and Michigan even passed laws to prevent criminals from using the discriminatory “panic” defense in court to justify their crimes.
- ***Uplifting and Protecting LGBTQ+ Youth.*** States like New York and Oregon have passed new funding to address mental health challenges among LGBTQ+ youth, while Oregon focused on reducing youth homelessness. And state Democrats promoted equality in education and strengthened anti-bullying protections.

## VOTING RIGHTS

- ***Protecting Voting Rights and Securing Elections.*** Democrats passed state-level voting rights acts in Virginia, New York, and Connecticut to ensure protections remain strong despite potential federal policy changes. And states like Michigan, Virginia, and Colorado passed laws to fight the scourge of election misinformation and to safeguard voting equipment from bad actors.
- ***Expanding Voter Access.*** Democratic-led states expanded mail-in voting in places like California and Nevada and created pre-registration for voters under 18 in New Mexico, Minnesota, and Michigan.

## GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- ***Enacting Common-Sense Gun Safety Laws.*** Democratic legislatures in states like Michigan and Minnesota have implemented universal background checks, expanded red flag laws, and regulated ghost guns. Michigan enacted a law to ensure safe storage of guns, which was used to prosecute careless gun storage.
- ***Preventing Gun Violence and Protecting Victims.*** State Democrats in Vermont and Michigan strengthened protections for domestic violence victims by restricting access to firearms for offenders. And in states like Illinois and Oregon, laws were set to reimburse hospitals for gun violence prevention programs, which address the broader impact of gun violence in communities.



# LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATION IN STATEHOUSES

## DEMOCRATS IN THE STATES REPRESENT THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE

Over the past decade, the diversity of the members in our Democratic caucuses at the state level has grown to better represent the communities they serve.

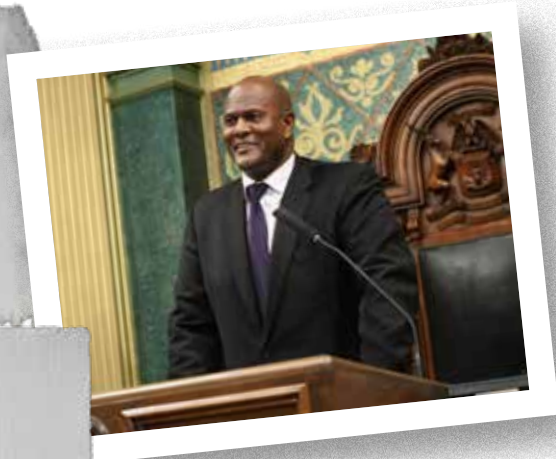
As the number of Black legislators has grown nationwide, the face of leadership has also changed. In the last two years, there has been an unprecedented number of Black speakers in our state legislatures, with many of these leaders continuing to serve in upcoming sessions.

**G** **Governing**  
For the people making government work.

**The 'Visible Power' of  
Black Lawmakers**

**pluribus**  
news

**Life lessons forged VA  
House speaker's 'tenacity'**



*Photo  
Courtesy  
of Michigan  
House  
Democrats*

**JOE TATE**  
FIRST BLACK SPEAKER OF THE  
MICHIGAN HOUSE

A historic number of LGBTQ+ legislators are now serving in office, largely driven by the Democratic gains over the past decade. At a time when Republicans have passed an unprecedented number of bills attacking the LGBTQ+ community, these leaders' voices matter more than ever in our statehouses.

**LGBTQ+ LEGISLATORS STANDING UP FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES:**

**VIRGINIA SENATOR DANICA ROEM**      **MONTANA REPRESENTATIVE ZOEY ZEPHYR**      **FLORIDA SENATOR SHEVRIN JONES**

The number of women has also increased in Democratic caucuses around the country. Three states - Nevada, Colorado, and New Mexico - have made history for reaching gender parity in their legislatures.

**PIPELINE OF POWER**

As state legislatures set the national agenda at the state level and move our agenda forward, it is also worth recognizing that many of the leaders at the state level go on to be future leaders at the national level.

From Abraham Lincoln and Barack Obama to nearly 50% of the members of our most recent Congress, many of our most prominent elected officials, past and present, got their start in state legislatures.

Supporting a diverse bench of talent in the states ensures that the Democratic Party of the future will continue to have strong leaders.

This past election, we celebrated the many state legislators running up-ticket who are now poised to make a difference in their new roles:

**LEGISLATORS ELECTED TO FEDERAL OR STATEWIDE OFFICE IN 2024**

**NORTH CAROLINA GOVERNOR JOSH STEIN**

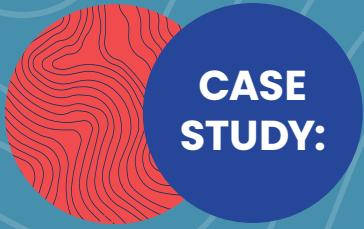
**CALIFORNIA U.S. SENATOR ADAM SCHIFF**

**DELAWARE CONGRESSWOMAN SARAH MCBRIDE**

**ARIZONA U.S. SENATOR RUBEN GALLEGO**

**20+**


**NEW U.S. HOUSE MEMBERS**



**CASE  
STUDY:**

# **HISTORIC LEADERSHIP IN VIRGINIA**





**T**he DLCC's 2023 victories in Virginia were a shining example of how Democratic wins at this level of the ballot translate to historic representation in statehouses. In 2023, not only did the DLCC hold our Democratic majority in the state Senate and flip the House of Delegates, but Virginians also elected the most diverse slate of Democratic state legislators in Virginia's history.

Speaker Don Scott made history when he was sworn in as the first Black Speaker of the Virginia House of Delegates, and became the 7th Black speaker serving across the country during the 2024 session - a new record.



*Photo by: Steve Helber/AP*

Democrats in the General Assembly had an unprecedented number of Black legislators in leadership positions, with Delegate Charniele Herring serving as the majority leader in the House and Senator Mamie Locke as the caucus chair in the Senate. In all, there was also a record number of 32 Black legislators in the General Assembly, with 25 Black delegates and 7 Black senators.

Virginians also elected a record number of women to the General Assembly, sending 47 women to Richmond - the vast majority of them Democrats. Virginia also elected a record 14 women to the state Senate. While Virginia has not yet reached gender parity, the progress over the past decade toward a more representative legislature is clear.

In the 2023 elections, Virginians also rejected the GOP's attacks on the LGBTQ+ community and elected a record nine openly LGBTQ+ legislators, an increase from six out legislators pre-election. All were Democrats. These legislators included Senator Danica Roem, who became the first openly transgender lawmaker ever to be elected to both chambers of a state legislature, and was the first openly trans state lawmaker to be elected and seated in the United States in 2017. Delegate Rozia Henson and Delegate Josh Cole jointly became the first out LGBTQ+ Black men ever elected to the General Assembly.

Diverse leadership in the Virginia General Assembly has real impacts for Virginians. After winning back control of the House of Delegates, Democrats passed legislation to protect same-sex marriage in Virginia law and used their power to block the GOP's hateful anti-LGBTQ+ agenda, anti-voting legislation that disproportionately targets Black voters, and attacks on Virginians' reproductive rights.



## POWERFUL MESSENGERS FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY

More than other ballot levels, state legislative candidates authentically match the values of and closely represent the diversity of the communities they serve. Strong state legislative campaigns are some of the most powerful messengers for the Democratic Party because our candidates live full-time in their districts – voters can run into their state representatives in the grocery store, at the gas pump, or in the school pick-up line. This is a highly accessible level of the ballot, and our candidates share the lived experience of their constituents.

Our programs knocked over 2 million doors in targeted districts in the final weeks of the campaign

Not only that, but door-knocking is the foundation of campaigning – state legislative candidates knock more doors than the federal ballot level, and the size and locality of their districts mean they can engage directly with voters many times over. While the federal level relies on paid communications and robust teams of volunteers, state legislative candidates are having meaningful personal conversations in real-time on the doors, persuading voters directly. Our candidates are uniquely able to bring the Democratic agenda to life for voters and discuss how federal and state policies impact their communities.

# SECTION III DLCC STRATEGY

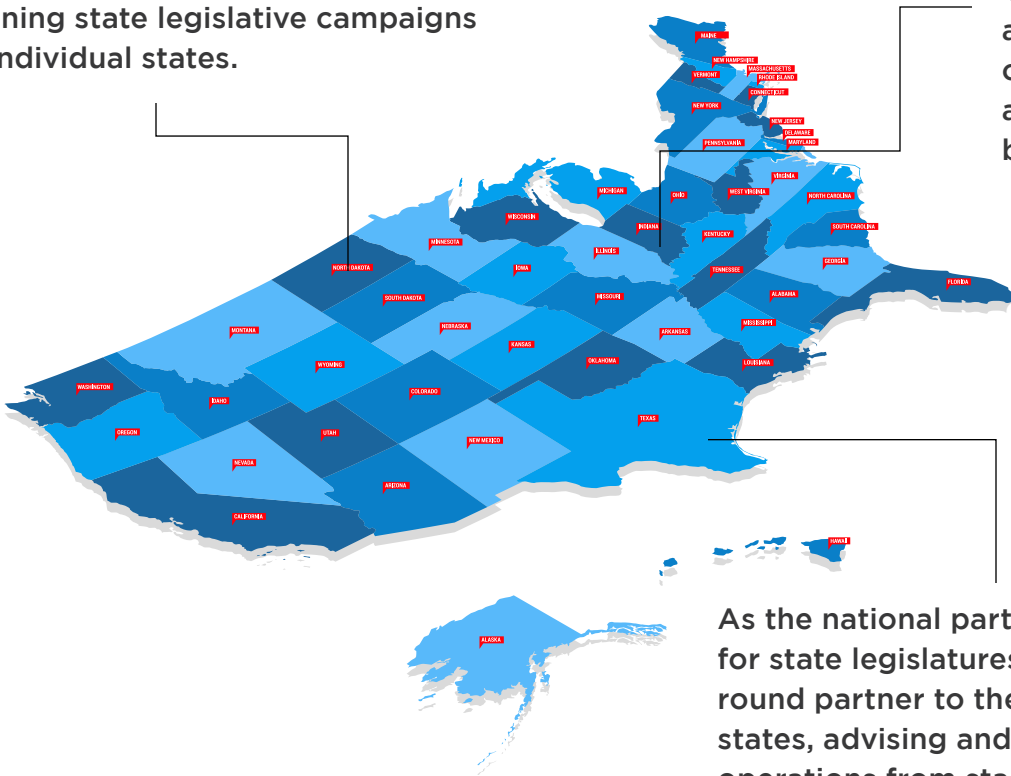
## EARLY SUPPORT ENSURES STABILITY AND CONSISTENCY

As the permanent, year-round presence and the strategic hub for investments in the states, the DLCC's work and investments each cycle act as multipliers. We work directly with our state caucuses and candidates early every cycle to set standards and ensure that campaign operations work toward self-sustaining practices. Over the last decade, we have seen this strategy pay off, including in the 2023-24 election cycle.

### WHAT IS A STATE CAUCUS?

State caucuses are responsible for running state legislative campaigns in individual states.

Most caucuses are not directly funded by the state party, and instead have their own dedicated staff and manage their own budgets.



As the national party committee responsible for state legislatures, the DLCC is a year-round partner to the caucuses in all 50 states, advising and financially supporting operations from start to finish.

Supporting caucuses early each cycle around staffing, budgeting, and candidate coordination puts our programs in the best position to seize on opportunities early and take advantage of later resources from outside groups.

# The Earliest Investments

The DLCC begins investing in caucus programs early in the cycle and far before the final weeks of a campaign.

In the most competitive chambers this cycle, we spent the majority of our hard-side investments earlier than ever before, providing an early and significant degree of stability amid a turbulent political environment this year.

This cycle, the DLCC also made two rounds of early investments to ensure that caucuses in key states had crucial early money to stabilize staffing and provide support for early infrastructure. Through many cycles of experience, we know the advantages of providing this early money cannot be replicated later in the cycle. Early investments are essential for ensuring that our state-level programs adhere to best practices and can take full advantage of the funding and resources that come later in the cycle.

**In Dec 2023 and January 2024, DLCC announced more than half a million in investments to help caucus programs meet critical early needs in the top battleground chambers:**



## The DLCC's Investments are Multipliers

Investing in infrastructure and developing strong caucus programs in the states early in the cycle is what the DLCC does best. Building internal, in-state fundraising capacity is key to increasing our party's overall resources and ability to defend and expand Democratic majorities.

Our work to collaborate with and support caucus programs in-state and implement comprehensive finance plans provides budget certainty and lays the foundation for sustainable success. This partnership has grown more robust each election cycle and is complemented by digital and online fundraising support from our in-house team to provide additional revenue streams throughout the cycle.

This cycle, the DLCC's direct political spending acted as a multiplier, setting caucus programs around the country on a path to achieve their own record fundraising, including new levels of support from partner and allied organizations.





# FINANCE PLANNING OVERVIEW

**T**he DLCC’s work to develop comprehensive budgets and finance plans for caucus operations has always been foundational to our operation and mission, and we have continued to see increases in the collective fundraising of our caucus programs over the course of the last three election cycles.

In 2020, the caucus operations on our target map raised over \$90 million; in 2022 they raised over \$106 million; and by 2024, our caucus programs set records across multiple chambers and collectively raised over \$182 million.

The DLCC’s role in advising and shaping the fundraising strategy in the most competitive chambers has been essential for winning and defending new majorities and establishing a positive trajectory for Democratic power in the states.

The DLCC is the only national organization focused on this ballot level that advises and consults with each of these caucus programs in a comprehensive and collaborative way to build growth-oriented fundraising plans. Our programs build on success from previous years and maximize what caucus programs raise from state-level partners, individual donors, and members of their caucus, where permissible, as well as hold candidates accountable for raising funds from their own districts and networks. Additionally, we had staff dedicated this cycle to working with multiple candidates across several targeted states to provide additional fundraising capacity.

## HOW WE PLAN FOR SUCCESS

The DLCC works with caucuses in the crucial first half of an election cycle when every dollar goes a long way in providing stability for programs and increasing their long-term trajectory.

This means consistent fundraising efforts and disciplined spending to make sure the vast majority of money is going to electoral programming ahead of the election.

This year, the DLCC state finance program assisted in several ways. In battleground states like Pennsylvania and Michigan, our team did the following:



## YEAR-ROUND WORK AND CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

Throughout the year, the DLCC is the only national entity directly responsible for the costs of party infrastructure at this ballot level, and our budget determines the core tools, data, and staff support we can make available to candidates and campaigns across the country. In addition to trainings and convenings in Washington, D.C., our staff regularly supports and deploys into caucus programs across the country to help advise programs and fill critical gaps.

This year, we were more efficient and effective than ever, and our staff worked on almost every aspect of the campaign operations. The DLCC maintains its in-house staff year-round to ensure that support and institutional knowledge is available at all times to our programs.

- **DLCC's Regional Political Directors**
  - Regularly advise caucus and legislative leaders
  - Instill best practices at the onset of campaigns
- **DLCC's State Finance Team**
  - Develop finance plans with caucuses
  - Identify and plan around projected budget gaps
- **DLCC's Campaign Services Team**
  - Support caucus digital fundraising operations
  - Provide data and tech support
- **DLCC's Communications Team**
  - Land national and local media for candidates
  - Provide media training and messaging guidance

## CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT

One of the clearest signs of our strong operations this year was consistently high candidate recruitment numbers across almost all of our battleground states. Strong candidate recruitment is a sign of a healthy operation that can reach into every corner of a state and manage large-scale efforts, such as helping candidates meet the filing requirements for running for office and set up their campaigns.

**Across our target chambers, 90% of districts had Democratic candidates, compared to just 75% of districts in non-target chambers.**

<b>CHAMBERS WITH HIGH OR RECORD RECRUITMENT</b>	
<b>CHAMBER</b>	<b>SEATS RECRUITED</b>
Arizona Senate	27 of 30
Michigan House	110 of 110
Minnesota House	132 of 134
New Hampshire Senate	24 of 24
New Hampshire House	364 of 400
North Carolina House	119 of 120
North Carolina Senate	50 of 50
Wisconsin Assembly	97 of 99
Wisconsin Senate	16 of 16

## **TARGETED DISTRICT PERFORMANCE**

Finally, state legislative field programs are incredibly important and impactful. Staying grounded in direct, targeted, personal communication works - and it can help break through the noise. We stayed focused on what works and avoided spending big and rolling the dice on targets where the data did not support a path to victory. These field programs put our candidates and their networks in positions to have authentic and meaningful persuasion conversations with voters all the way through Election Day. Our races are often won by close margins, and this tactic remains a critical strategy to support that work.

Compared to past Democratic performance, Democratic candidates performed better this year in target districts than in non-target districts. With an effective strategy that consolidated resources to the most competitive races where there were clear, data-supported paths to victory, we moved the needle and the data so far

suggests an average 1.48 percentage point gain among target districts compared to non-target districts – a significant and meaningful difference when considering how close state legislative races and many of our chambers were this year.

The table below shows the average Democratic state legislative performance in 2024 compared to past Democratic performance. Target districts performed better compared to non-target districts.

STATE	AVERAGE IMPACT IN TARGETS VS NON-TARGETS
WI Senate	+3.00%
PA House	+2.86%
NC House	+1.53%
MI House	+1.52%
NC Senate	+1.39%
AZ Senate	+1.23%
MN House	+0.81%
WI Assembly	+0.72%

*Source: DLCC internal data on unofficial results for 2024 targeted races, subject to changes as elections results are finalized.*

In the Minnesota House, the chamber came down to a tie this year, and the legislative performance we saw in targeted races compared to non-targeted races made the difference in six of the most competitive districts. Without this boost in these competitive districts, Republicans would have flipped this chamber and taken the majority by several seats.

In the Pennsylvania House, Democrats retained their single-seat majority, and our target candidates' performance compared to non-targeted candidates made the difference in four races. Without these wins, the GOP would have flipped the majority by several seats and taken total control of the PA legislature.

And in the Michigan House, it is clear that the DLCC's work minimized the GOP's gain. There were six extremely close districts where we helped candidates increase performance compared to non-targeted races and hold their ground, putting us in a much stronger position to retake this chamber next cycle.

## STATE DEMOCRACY ACTION FUND

State Democracy Action Fund (SDAF), the affiliated 501(c)(4) of the DLCC, works to actively engage everyone — especially the New American Majority (NAM) — with state government, ensuring everyone has the tools to fight for and protect their rights while holding their leaders accountable for their votes and actions. SDAF provides the education and skills needed to connect everyday people with their state government, and break down the barriers between what matters most to communities and those empowered to make laws and regulate our institutions.

In 2023 and 2024, SDAF centered its work on educating people on their state government. SDAF provided access to the legislation being proposed and passed in their states, ran programs to highlight legislative efforts, and gave everyday Americans - especially the New American Majority - the resources needed to fully participate in our democracy. SDAF ran programs and funded work in Virginia, Minnesota, and Wisconsin in 2023, and in New Hampshire, Arizona, Kansas, and North Carolina in 2024.

In addition to this work, SDAF ran nonpartisan get-out-the-vote programming in Michigan, North Carolina, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Arizona, Maine, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Alaska, and New Hampshire to turn out the NAM, particularly young women, in the 2024 election.

**SDAF's programming targeted 240,000 voters and received over 8 million impressions across social media and streaming platforms.**



*Through a 15-second explainer-type ad in 2023, SDAF showcased the facts and legislation being presented in Virginia*



## SECTION IV

# THE FIGHT AHEAD IN 2025-26



## The State Legislature Firewall

Now that Republicans have secured a federal trifecta, the states are the most impactful place to build Democratic power and launch the resistance to the Trump administration's agenda - including Project 2025.

State legislatures were an important counterweight during Trump's first term, and our foundation of power in state legislatures has grown significantly since then.

When Donald Trump won in 2016, there were just 29 Democratic majorities in state legislatures. Thanks to a decade of hard-fought wins, this time there will be at least 39 Democratic-controlled chambers. Not only that, but Democrats have 15 trifectas now compared to just six in 2016. The growth in state power for Democrats is our best opportunity to safeguard against the chaos and worst policies of this new administration.

If Republicans try to eradicate the Department of Education, Democrats are ready in the states to fight back and invest in public schools. If Republicans dismantle the Paris Climate Accords and eliminate the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), state Democrats will lead the charge on climate solutions. If Republicans pass sweeping attacks on reproductive care, state Democrats stand ready to fight for women and those who love them.

**With the power to protect the rights and livelihoods of over 160 million Americans and oversight over nearly 50% of the U.S. economy, Democratic majorities in state legislatures across our nation stand ready to lead against Trump's MAGA agenda.**

## STATES TO WATCH

**Big Blue States:** In states like California, New York, and Illinois, Democratic legislatures are already working together with Democratic governors and other statewide elected officials to prepare for the ill effects of the Trump administration. In California, which represents the world's fifth largest economy by itself, these efforts have included shoring up critical initiatives addressing climate change and disaster relief, as well as initiatives to ensure access to health care.

**Newer Majorities:** In states like Minnesota, Michigan, and Virginia, Democratic majorities have bolstered protections for voting rights and civil liberties since taking office. Most recently in Virginia, Democrats have introduced bills to ensure that abortion rights and marriage equality are further protected under state laws.

Democratic legislators and leaders will also be on the frontlines in states where Republicans currently hold majorities, standing up for their constituents and communities against extreme policies. Democratic state legislators in red states across the country have shown courage on issues ranging from addressing gun violence to protecting immigrant communities, and that work will continue. As we brace ourselves for GOP-controlled states to become testing grounds for Project 2025, state Democrats are best positioned to end the crusade of MAGA hate.

As we look to the elections of 2025 and beyond, we must support down-ballot Democrats to strengthen the firewall in our statehouses and ensure we're on the strongest trajectory possible for redistricting in 2030.







2025-2026

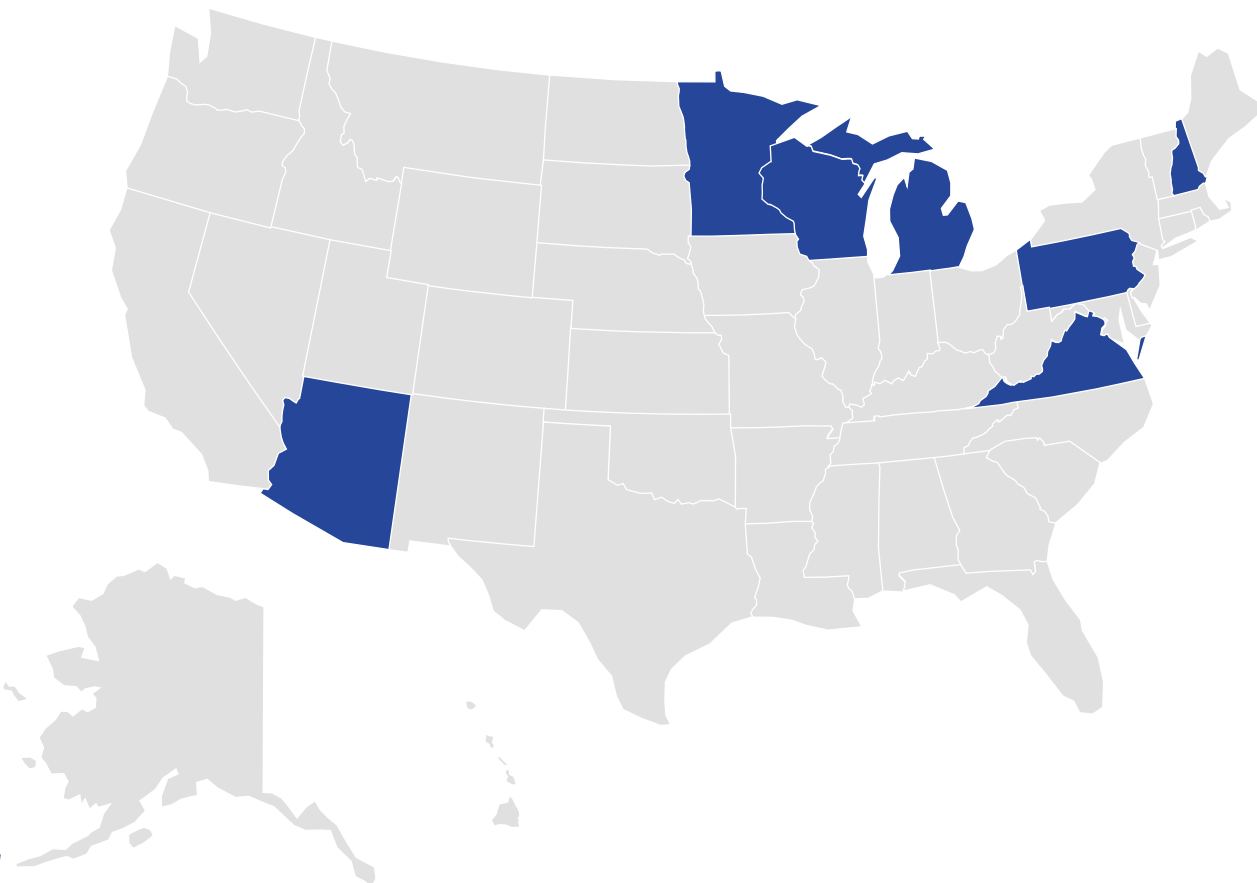
# OPPORTUNITIES

## Our Emerging 2025/2026 Target Map

**A**fter a decade of progress, our battlegrounds for 2025-2026 are the frontline for shifting the balance of power in this country. Victories won't be measured by a single cycle - they must be won and defended through the end of the decade.

The DLCC has the data and expertise to pinpoint exactly where resources will go furthest to tip the balance of power in these states, and our work to build winning programs is already underway. Majorities in these states this cycle will come down to just a few seats and possibly just a few hundred votes, so our efforts to bring attention and resources to bear will have a significant impact.

Our top targets this cycle are the states where majorities are in play this decade and where support and resources will help us win and defend the majorities that can make the biggest difference for the most people. Democrats have a path to victory in these states when we have the resources and infrastructure needed to compete:



## COMPETITIVE CHAMBERS IN 2025-26

Chamber	Current Status	Seat Margin
Virginia House	Dem Majority	51 D - 49 R
Minnesota House	Tied Chamber	67 D - 67 R
Minnesota Senate	Dem Majority	34 D - 33 R
Michigan House	GOP Majority	52 D - 57 R
Michigan Senate	Dem Majority	20 D - 18 R
Pennsylvania House	Dem Majority	102 D - 101 R
New Hampshire House	GOP Majority	178 D - 222 R
Arizona House	GOP Majority	27 D - 33 R
Arizona Senate	GOP Majority	13 D - 17 R
Wisconsin Assembly	GOP Majority	45 D - 54 R
Wisconsin Senate	GOP Majority	15 D - 18 R

## SPECIAL ELECTIONS

There are no off-years or even off-months at this ballot level, and consequential special elections are frequent across our battlegrounds. In the 2023-24 cycle, over 100 state legislative special elections were held across the country, and the DLCC strategized as the party committee to capitalize on opportunities to both defend and flip seats.

Last cycle, we won the majority of special elections in the states, securing important seat flips and defending majority-deciding races in multiple chambers. Overall, we established a positive trendline, **with our special election candidates outperforming presidential performance by more than six percent.**

We already have a dozen special elections on our radar in the early months of 2025. These elections will be among the first under the Trump administration and represent must-win races. That includes two key special elections in Virginia in SD-32 and HD-26 next month where our Democratic majorities hang on the line. Beyond what's already on our radar, we'll continue to watch the landscape in chambers with slim margins like the Minnesota Senate (1-seat Dem majority), Pennsylvania House (1-seat Dem majority), and Michigan House (2-seat GOP



**VISIT [DLCC.ORG](https://dlcc.org) FOR MORE INFORMATION**

Contact the DLCC Development Team with questions or for help making a contribution.

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