

**Democracy Initiative: 2019 Campaign Plan and Priority Setting**

The Democracy Initiative (DI) is 68 partner organizations representing more than 40 million activist members from the labor, civil rights, environmental, faith, women’s rights, immigrant, and democracy reform movements. Together, the DI partners educate and mobilize those members for to create demand for democracy reform across the country. Through grassroots training and close partner collaboration the DI is developing leaders among community stakeholders, particularly people of color, women, young people, and working class. around These leaders integrate democracy reform into their communications and engagement with their members, elevating the democracy reform agenda while building and sustaining a grassroots base of support for a stronger democracy 365 days a year.

After breaking turnout records and winning sixteen (16) democracy reforms, the 2018 mid-term elections made one thing crystal clear: when democracy is on the ballot, it both unites the electorate and wins. From restoring and protecting voting rights to ridding states of gerrymandered districting, voters from all sides are hungry to cast their ballots for a fair, safe, accountable political system. This election cycle takes us another step closer to that reality.

The six DI priority democracy reform campaigns from 2018:

* **Florida:** Passage of [Amendment 4 restores](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.vox.com%2Fpolicy-and-politics%2F2018%2F11%2F6%2F18052374%2Fflorida-amendment-4-felon-voting-rights-results&data=02%7C01%7Cmcarpinteyro%40commoncause.org%7C9f521154b00c498a26c508d644d59c93%7Cdb39e4b4de324cf9b66e9d02d8172178%7C0%7C0%7C636772081588156605&sdata=pyw8VQdJyIm5l0ASkcSu1z7E8pwQggS1mKuPaC1Zvpg%3D&reserved=0) the right to vote to 1.4 million people with prior felony convictions
* **Michigan:** A [package of voting reforms](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.huffingtonpost.com%2Fentry%2Fmichigan-promote-the-vote_us_5bdcda50e4b09d43e31f00e9&data=02%7C01%7Cmcarpinteyro%40commoncause.org%7C9f521154b00c498a26c508d644d59c93%7Cdb39e4b4de324cf9b66e9d02d8172178%7C0%7C0%7C636772081588156605&sdata=3T4b3CDLGjBJxCBQihHvn7obuyov6qhPBHE1ZiWdbHM%3D&reserved=0) including automatic voter registration, same day voter registration, no-excuse absentee ballots, straight-ticket voting, and election audits passed.
* **Michigan:**[Voters back a constitutional amendment](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.huffingtonpost.com%2Fentry%2Fmichigan-gerrymandering-proposal-2_us_5bdb6f15e4b04367a87ae705&data=02%7C01%7Cmcarpinteyro%40commoncause.org%7C9f521154b00c498a26c508d644d59c93%7Cdb39e4b4de324cf9b66e9d02d8172178%7C0%7C0%7C636772081588156605&sdata=EHqj4Gr4D21z2YxCUADrFdn%2BdmO356tTPWMTBurF5YQ%3D&reserved=0) to create a nonpartisan, independent redistricting commission.
* **Missouri:** The [Clean Missouri initiative passes](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.columbiamissourian.com%2Fnews%2Felections%2Fvoters-strongly-support-clean-missouri-redistricting-plan-ethics-reform%2Farticle_6d2a9728-e155-11e8-b58e-43f1d7945f4e.html&data=02%7C01%7Cmcarpinteyro%40commoncause.org%7C9f521154b00c498a26c508d644d59c93%7Cdb39e4b4de324cf9b66e9d02d8172178%7C0%7C0%7C636772081588156605&sdata=buja11CXfnGNDx4CUp8cilb5AXKGY5IVxfMQek0neyU%3D&reserved=0) that requires a fairer redistricting process so that no one political party will have an advantage in drawing state legislative maps, includes provisions on transparency, campaign finance, ethics, and redistricting
* **Maryland:** Statewide [Election Day registration passed](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FEveryoneVotesMD%2Fstatus%2F1060179290954850305&data=02%7C01%7Cmcarpinteyro%40commoncause.org%7C9f521154b00c498a26c508d644d59c93%7Cdb39e4b4de324cf9b66e9d02d8172178%7C0%7C0%7C636772081588156605&sdata=1WWyY1CctnOZdaIgxzk5p0xs%2B13HuLd5j21yNN487W4%3D&reserved=0)
* **Maryland:**Local small donor campaign public financing program passed in[Baltimore](https://na01.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FBmoreFairElex%2Fstatus%2F1060025953462689792&data=02%7C01%7Cmcarpinteyro%40commoncause.org%7C9f521154b00c498a26c508d644d59c93%7Cdb39e4b4de324cf9b66e9d02d8172178%7C0%7C0%7C636772081588156605&sdata=az5JOwp89VJTAPkNqHY1Nm%2BRFMEM%2BW9SGAOE0gyCXD4%3D&reserved=0) City.

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| *40 Democracy Reforms by 2020* |
| **OUTCOMES** |
| **INCREASE PARTICIPATION** |  **BLUNT THE INFLUENCE OF CORPORATE MONEY** | **CREATE A FAIR, REPRESENTATIVE, & REFLECTIVE GOVERNMENT** |
| * Universal Registration 100%
* All voters vote within 30 minutes
* 100% of votes cast are counted and verified
* 75% Voter turnout
* Rights restored to returning citizens
* Achieve equity in voting access and equipment
* Recruit thousands of activists to play a role in civic engagement and election oversight.
 | * Citizens-funded elections (ultimate goal)
* Campaign contribution limits on corporations and companies that engage in privatization contracts or lobbying
 | * Transparent processes for drawing district lines
* Independent and third party candidates
* Increased representation for citizens and effective ways to hold elected leaders accountable
* District lines and election systems no longer protect incumbents
* Competitive elections
* Open primaries
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| **Potential Path of Reforms** |
| AVR, SDR, early voting, Election Day Holiday, Restoration of Rights, vote by mail and vote centers, paper ballots and audits. | Those reforms that move us closer to national public financing, overturning “Citizens United” and other moneyed interests influence in government, and build transparency and accountability. | Other reforms and campaigns to be considered: National Popular vote, Compact, Redistricting reforms (including fair representation models), also important to keep the Census in mind |

**“Mobilizing Hubs**”

In 2019, the DI is committed to strengthening sustainable a grassroots infrastructure – building the ground game -- which can adequately support scaled up local and state coalitions’ action on implementation of reform victories and launch the next series of reforms. The DI will provide opportunities that deepen engagement of members and activists at the state and local level, strengthening the mobilizing infrastructure and making wins stick. We believe this locally-based, Mobilizing Hub, approach will accomplish the following objectives:

* Create a powerful grassroots demand for both state and federal reforms to shift policy makers,
* Scale up strategic wins to make the case for federal reforms,
* Foster an ecosystem of true, deep grassroots action for democracy by lifting up intersectionality, and increasing cultural competency, and
* Build a national narrative on the demand for change in this historic moment.

**The DI Model**

The DI seeks to scale-up burgeoning and existing reform efforts, particularly in underserved, urban communities, and contribute to building a strong sustainable democracy ground game with our 40 million members and community allies. Central to building that ground games means our program must focus on creating the conditions that foster year-round civic engagement. In 2019, we will provide the opportunities and forums for collaboration, with both national, state, and local leaders to identify the reforms that will inspire and win results for both their community and memberships. DI is the connective tissue between national and state reform efforts with the ability to make wins stick and ensure each activist and member feels a part of something larger. That means these stakeholders must be the face and voice of the community effort, and that they have adequate tools, messages, and resources.

In 2019, the DI will pilot the following opportunities for partners’ engagement:

* Co-create pilot **mobilizing democracy hub** in Michigan, while supporting emerging hubs in key states. Given the positive redistricting and voting rights reforms experience in 2018, DI will first pilot a local “mobilizing hub” based in Flint, Michigan to align partners’ engagement in implementation and in multiple state democracy and issue campaigns and create an environment for progress on future democracy reforms in 2019-2020.
* Launch a policy **package of democracy reforms** strategically in key states to expand voting rights, blunt the outsized influence of corporate money, and foster fair representation. DI will undertake a landscape assessment DI’s Mobilizing Committee of partner organizations as well as state and local leaders in the field to determine next priorities for educational campaigns to build support democracy reforms and to ensure implementation of 2018 wins.
* **Co-create and align field action in the national democracy space.** DI will align its partners’ member education and organizing to act as a local level driver to influence other efforts in the democracy movement, coordinating disciplined messaging and creating efficiencies for maximum impact
* **Scale up Democracy Champions Training & Developing Leaders of Color.** An important priority for 2019 will be to expand the “Democracy Champions” popular education program to train more staff, members, and volunteers from coalition partners. The trainings make the connection between democracy, money in politics, voting rights, and the groups’ everyday issues -- while developing skills to win field campaigns.
* **Develop and Launch an Issue-based, Grassroots Narrative.** Using lessons from grassroots outreach in 2017-2018 and drawing from formal research, DI will develop an engaging grassroots narrative linking democracy reforms with member groups kitchen table issues to be tailored to and deployed by each issue groups’ membership outreach.
	+ **Provide** **messaging tools and guides for organizers** – research, digital, talking points, and grassroots organizing materials – to build capacity for partner groups so they can integrate inspiring democracy messaging in their ongoing communications and to assist the campaign structures in the field.

# 2019 State Priority Setting

Following the midterm elections, the DI staff distributed a survey to Mobilizing Committee, soliciting feedback on organizational issue and campaign priorities for 2019. More than 40 partner surveys were completed, representing nearly half of the DI’s 68-member coalition. Those survey responses helped inform this initial Campaign Plan. During December, the DI staff will conduct a collaborative process that will include many additional Mobilizing Committee partners to develop a recommendation for 3-5 states to prioritize in 2019. The DI will emphasize building grassroots infrastructure and capacity, changing the national narrative, and increasing power to create the space for future successes.

The following are key considerations that inform the decision-making process on the localities along with using the race, class and gender lens.

1. Key States for DI partners, including membership density and key local leaders.
2. Implementation or defense of recent democracy reforms (MI, MO, and MD)
3. Political path forward, especially flip states (New Dem trifecta states; NY, NM, CO, and CT)
4. Additional issues to consider: Sanctuary Cities, Cities that are following Paris Climate Agreement, Water Privatization, Civil Rights DOJ, or local Workers Right to Organize fights.

These priority states will present opportunities for DI partners to advance major kitchen table issue ranging from minimum wage increases, to criminal justice reforms, overturning right to work laws, to health and environmental issues. In 2019, following the blatant voter suppression efforts and clear repudiation by the voters, there are opportunities to make the linkages clear, and align issue campaigns with democracy reform campaigns to strengthen both efforts.

### Building Power for the Future: 2020

The goal for recommended priority states is not only focused on immediate short term wins in 2019 but include long term strategic investment. We understand not every state or campaign will have immediate success in 2019. In these states, the DI will work with and enhance the strength and coordination of state based groups on emerging reform plans, with the understanding we are working long term to build power and a strong coalition and help create the condition for success in 2020.

### Moving Forward

Over the next year, we will work to create a sense of urgency around the multi-year comprehensive national and state reform campaigns. Leading up to the Annual Meeting, the DI created a democracy reform campaigns survey for DI groups to better understand and align with our partners on their priorities campaigns. We will examine those democracy reform solutions that are of major interest to our issue-based partners. For example, vote by mail, same day registration, corporate contribution limits and the People’s Pac. As we move forward we will adjust DI priorities to better reflect that of our partners. DI partners are welcomed and encouraged to share the priority states and democracy reform campaigns.