

DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE



2020 VISION FRAMEWORK

FOR THE DEMOCRACY ALLIANCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ten years ago, our collective imagination created a community of donors that would think and invest together to build a strategic and coordinated progressive infrastructure to counter right-wing dominance and establish a progressive majority. In its founding prospectus, the DA wrote:

A CONSENSUS HAS EMERGED THAT THE PROGRESSIVE CAUSE WOULD BENEFIT GREATLY FROM A BETTER INFORMED AND NETWORKED COMMUNITY OF PROGRESSIVE DONORS...THE VALUE PROPOSITION FOR ALLIANCE PARTICIPANTS IS THAT THEY CAN LEARN TOGETHER; BUILD RELATIONSHIPS; INVEST MORE INTELLIGENTLY; INVEST COLLABORATIVELY; MONITOR INVESTMENTS AS PART OF A COMMUNITY OF DONORS; AND HELP TO ASSURE MORE GENEROUS SUPPORT, OVER THE LONG TERM, FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF PROGRESSIVE LEADERS AND MORE EFFECTIVE PROGRESSIVE ORGANIZATIONS.

That prescient value proposition has been substantially achieved. More than \$500 million has been raised to build and sustain elements of the progressive infrastructure — from multi-issue think tanks to a sophisticated media monitoring apparatus — that did not exist or were just being launched ten years ago. In many states — though not enough, and not yet to the necessary scale — strong donor and organizational tables have been built that have increased progressive power and influence. Many progressive ideas and policies have achieved broad popular support. A critical mass of voters now agrees with progressive values and ideals. Our data, tools, and utilities have been effectively used to mobilize voters and coordinate work at the state and national level. Indeed, health care would certainly have been among our 2020 priorities, would it not have been for the concentrated and strategic use of our progressive infrastructure — much of it supported by DA — in passing and protecting the Affordable Care Act, a real and important step in addressing inequality. And the electoral victories in 2006, 2008 and 2012 bear the stamp of these coordinated investments made by DA Partners.

Yet we also know that winning elections — when we do — while absolutely necessary, is far from sufficient. The electoral victories that we have had have not been enough to enact most elements of our progressive agenda, and we have not been able to retain our gains in the face of a resilient and heavily financed right wing. Our opponents have steadily undermined the legitimacy of government and key independent and nonpartisan institutions, allowing corporations and wealthy individuals to create legislative and structural impediments to a fair economy, functioning democracy, and rational environmental policy. To alter these ratios of power and influence such that we attain and sustain progressive policies, we must marshal resources with a sense of urgency over the next six years.

We have been living with the adverse consequences — for women, for people of color, for workers, for democracy, for our climate - of a right-wing political map forged by the 2010 election, and we cannot let that happen again.

Since its beginning, the Democracy Alliance (DA) has paused every three years to survey the political and cultural landscape, and think through where our investments — of funds, most importantly, but also of other capital like convening power, relationships, and idea generation — should be made for the future. We are at such a reflection point now. In this document, we propose a longer strategic view, planning for the DA's work through 2020, when there is both a census and a Presidential election that will be critical for every issue we care about. We have been living with the adverse consequences — for women, for people of color, for children, for workers, for democracy, for our climate — of a right wing political map forged by the 2010 election, and we cannot let that happen again for the decade of the 2020s. In order to avoid a repeat of the current decade, and given the stalemate in Washington, we must focus even more heavily on building power in the states.

By the next decade, we seek an America where progressives hold the reins of power and use them to make significant impact on several of our nation's greatest challenges: fixing our democracy, making the economy work for all, and addressing climate change — while staying nimble and flexible to address emerging issues.

Our 2020 Vision builds on our past successes, learns from our setbacks and raises our sights higher to imagine what a community of like-minded progressive donors is uniquely poised to accomplish together in the months and years ahead. By the next decade, we seek an America where progressives hold the reins of power and use them to make significant impact on several of our nation's greatest challenges: fixing our democracy, making the economy work for all, and addressing climate change — while staying nimble and flexible to address emerging issues.

THE DA'S 2020 VISION: LONGER HORIZON, LARGER GOALS

Building on DA's past achievements, we began this process by asking: we have helped to build a much stronger progressive infrastructure, but for what purposes and to what ends? The answer, we believe, is to overcome the key structural challenges that impede the building of sustainable progressive power by aligning our investments around three central and connected goals:

- **A fair democracy where everyone can participate**
- **A growing economy that works for all**
- **A planet that is healthy and safe**

We address these three issues together because they are deeply connected. Climate disruption is a serious threat to prosperity, and we cannot act together to confront our economic and our climate challenges without a healthy democracy. At the same time, radical economic inequality eats at the foundations of a democratic society, just as it erodes the sources of economic growth and innovation necessary to reversing climate change. The issues we seek to address are not merely issue advocacy battles, they are game-changers, critical not only to advancing sound policy outcomes but to making our government, economy, and planet more fair, democratic, and sustainable, while simultaneously building progressive power for the long term.

This document outlines a proposed approach for addressing each of these three goals. In the sections that follow, we describe the problems we seek to address and offer a series of ideas and recommendations for how the DA can make significant progress by 2020. The recommendations have some commonalities:

- They seek to build progressive power that produces electoral and policy victories.
- They require sustained investment in the kind of core infrastructure that the DA has helped to build.
- They require new investments in places and people — namely, state-based infrastructure and the key constituencies that have comprised the Rising American Electorate (voters of color, young people, and single women), with greater attention to other communities (e.g., working class whites, LGBTQ Americans) that share progressive values. In effect, we aspire to solidify a New American Majority that will stretch progressive reach, extend the electoral map, and become a sustainable source of progressive power.

This document articulates goals and recommended investment approaches for achieving them, but the policy development, campaign strategies, framing, and other programmatic work it entails will be led by the organizations we support. We want to think together with our movement allies about how to maneuver and win, but the DA's role in this division of labor is to summon the range of our resources — money, convening power, influence, relationships, etc. — in service of our shared objectives. In short, we have policy goals and, ultimately, recommended investments, but it is the groups we support who will chart the path towards meeting them.

TOWARD A RESTORED DEMOCRACY

The ratios of political access and power are dangerously out of balance. Since *Citizens United* especially, wealthy elites and corporations have gained significantly more control over and influence in government and policy, and everyone else — especially the young, communities of color, women, and low-income citizens — have seen their voice and access dramatically eroded.

For many across the political spectrum, government seems beholden to the self-dealing interests of often hidden individual donors, large corporations, and partisan strategists. Overall trust in and attitudes toward government is at an all-time low. Deep hostility

Polarization is a method rather than the outcome of a right-wing strategy to disconnect Americans from a government that can improve their lives and benefit their communities.

toward public institutions have been engineered by the Right to serve the ideological, economic, and political agenda of its wealthy donors, but has not been helped by our occasional failures of execution. In the main, polarization is a partisan method rather than the outcome of a right-wing strategy to disconnect Americans from a government that can improve their lives and benefit their communities.

The Right has also systematically exploited structural and cultural power imbalances. First, they have benefitted from the political status quo, which in its overrepresentation of white men and underrepresentation of women, people of color, LGBTQ Americans, and young people, dictates how issues are framed, whose interests are pursued, whose families are supported, and which policy solutions are embraced and enacted. Second, the Right has successfully engineered strategies designed to prevent progressive constituencies from exerting their political power — for example by attacking organized labor and restricting access to the ballot box. The premise is simple — strong voter participation favors progressives, so conservatives have sought to narrow the electorate, enacting legislation in 21 states that makes voting more difficult. At the same time, the Right’s successful legal assault on the Voting Rights Act has, through the *Shelby v. Holder* Supreme Court case, hindered the Justice Department’s ability to enforce voting rights.

Conservatives have been able to set the terms for and carry out this agenda in Congress and state legislatures because they were able to draw district lines in 2011 that guaranteed they would gain and maintain power. Redistricting dramatically affects democratic representation and policy outcomes. The stakes, therefore, in the byzantine process of drawing district lines are among the highest in American politics. The 2010 election resulted gerrymandering that all but cemented a Republican House of Representatives for the remainder of the decade. In five states (Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin) in the 2012 election, Democrats averaged 49% percent of the total statewide Congressional vote, yet ended up with 31 of the 96 available seats. This has produced the avalanche of regressive legislation ranging from voter suppression, to denial of reproductive rights, to preventing Medicaid expansion.

Redressing these distortions of our democracy will require strategies that can attract and benefit a broad range of Americans. Democracy reform is notoriously difficult and often siloed into distinct fields of activity — money in politics, voting rights/election administration, the judiciary, and apportionment/redistricting. Moreover, promoting the diversity of our nation’s elected leaders and the leadership development pipeline required to attract and nurture diverse talent must be seen as a core democracy issue, and key to our theory of building progressive power.

It should be noted that the failure to win on progressive issues is not a failure of public opinion. When polled, voters agree by a substantial margin that large private donations corrupt the system, that every eligible voter should be allowed to participate, that a judge should not receive campaign contributions from people or businesses that might come before her/his court, that district lines should be drawn in a nonpartisan way that doesn’t unfairly disadvantage and disenfranchise its constituents, etc. And yet, despite this overwhelming consensus, democracy reform has been difficult and rare — a situation made increasingly worse by the Roberts Court.

¹ Recent research commissioned by the Women’s Donor Network found that elected leaders are 90% white (when people of color constitute 37% of the population) and 71% male (although men comprise 49% of the population).

Although there are many high-performing organizations working on these issues, critical capacity gaps remain that have made it challenging to transform this overwhelming public support into meaningful policy reform. A 2012 scan of the money in politics field, for example, revealed that more than three times the number of nonprofits working on the issue described their core competency as data analysis — documenting the extent of the problem — rather than organizing around a coherent reform agenda. While good data are undoubtedly necessary tools for effective policy development and issue advocacy, there is a critical need to shore up local and state-based organizing capacity. Additionally, most of the historic work in much of the democracy space has been led by national policy/advocacy organizations and has insufficiently involved — or been led by — communities of color, women, and young people.

A successful effort would achieve the following:

- A modernized election system that makes voting more efficient, convenient, and accessible to all; a restoration of minority voting rights; and the enactment of proactive voting reforms and modernizations that expand access and participation in a number of states.
- A reduction of the role of big money in politics, campaign finance reform in several states, and closer partnerships between campaign finance activists with other movements and communities supported by the DA.
- A more robust pipeline of federal judges, fewer judicial vacancies, and fewer partisan state judicial electoral campaigns.
- A strengthened leadership development pipeline that helps increase the number of progressive women, people of color, and LGBTQ elected leaders.
- A fair 2020 Census and favorable redistricting process leading to a more representative democracy and stronger progressive governance.

Comprehensive democracy reform is an enormous undertaking, and achieving all of the goals outlined above will require a level of resources that far exceed what the DA can currently invest/leverage — and more time than our current five-year horizon. Each goal delineated above also requires dedicated investments in infrastructure and campaigns, which also benefit our other issue priorities.

The recommended investment approach has seven elements:

- Build the state level capacity needed to overturn restrictive voting laws and enact proactive voting reforms by investing in litigation and grassroots organizing, especially among those communities most directly affected by voter suppression laws.
- Support the development of state policy infrastructure, such as a progressive counter to the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) that would equip progressive state legislators to beat back restrictive legislation and enact progressive reforms.
- Continue to invest in the legal infrastructure that is working to appoint highly qualified judges who will respect the rule of law and present a viable and widely adopted alternative to constitutional originalism.

Although there are many high-performing organizations working on these issues, critical capacity gaps remain that have made it challenging to transform this overwhelming public support into meaningful policy reform.

- Support collaborative funding efforts that serve as centers of gravity in fields such as money in politics, and that are working to knit together approaches that will produce impact and success — state and federal policy reform, jurisprudential work, communications and messaging, etc.
- Invest in candidate recruitment and political leadership development programs.
- Establish a hub for tracking nonpartisan and partisan Census and redistricting activities and ensure that adequate resources are committed to the necessary components of a favorable redistricting process: a fair and complete Census, strong citizen initiatives that work to establish independent commissions, where beneficial, and the election of progressive executives and state and federal representatives, who will be in charge of drawing district lines that result in fair apportionment.
- Explore and support other game-changing reforms that would strengthen citizens' voices and power.

BUILDING AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL

Market capitalism has yielded massive increases in human prosperity. Yet, despite its historic accomplishments, the American economy is not generating growth and prosperity as it did in the middle of the 20th century. For decades our economy has produced falling incomes and growing economic insecurity for most Americans. Women, working class Americans, and communities of color have been hardest hit, facing structural barriers to gains in wealth and income.

Growing inequality — of income, wealth and political power — is an unmistakable and unsustainable cause and consequence of dangerous, outmoded “trickle down” economic policies. No free and open society can endure long-term wage stagnation and sustain continuously rising inequality. Yet simply complaining about inequality is insufficient. As long as the trickle down economic paradigm continues to hold sway, progressives will struggle in the economic debate. As we fight on the margins, rather than taking on the dominant theory of growth, our situation continues to deteriorate and the prospects for a progressive economy worsen. Our challenge as the DA is to re-imagine the core meaning and purpose of prosperity itself, and to build an economy where growth is a product of continuously expanding political and economic inclusion.

Conservatives have for decades promoted trickle down economics under the theory that the wealth of the wealthy and the profits of corporations — the concentrated accumulation of capital — is the prerequisite for growth. This claim was never true — the slavish adherence to these ideas almost destroyed democracy itself in the Great Depression.

There is nothing inevitable about the current state of our economy. Falling real wages are a consequence of monetary and fiscal policy, sharp reduction in the power of workers to bargain collectively, and erosions of worker protections like the minimum wage. Regressive tax policies and the growing influence of the financial sector have further accelerated these growing disparities of wealth and income. Ninety percent of Americans have been and are losing ground. This decline is a majority phenomenon and must be treated as such.

Part of the urgency behind a strategy for raising wages of investment and inclusion is that we live in a globalized economy — where only nations that invest in themselves and their workforce as a whole will prosper. We cannot afford any longer to pursue the downward spiral of falling wages and falling public investment while our competitors seek a positive cycle of rising incomes that can support rising public investment. As a country, we have under-invested in public tools to ensure our long-term prosperity, including early care and education and training, scientific research and infrastructure.

A functioning economy — one that provides both incentives to innovate and distributes wealth and income broadly — should be measured in terms of outcomes — how a family's life is improved. The contrasts between a contemporary progressive theory of growth and the old failed trickle down theory are clear: it is a contrast between *dynamic* versus a *static* understanding of our economy, of *creation* versus *allocation*, *effectiveness* versus *efficiency*, *outcomes* versus *output*, and *inclusion* versus *exclusion*.

When we as a nation come together to promote innovation and investment, and when we ensure that everyone in our society benefits from the wealth we create, we generate more consumers who have more money, expand demand for goods and services, increase people's ability to develop their own human capital, accelerate the pace of entrepreneurship and innovation, and thereby spur economic growth. In the real economy, prosperity comes from the effective creation and broad diffusion of new solutions to human problems. Broad based prosperity and a thriving middle class are not the consequences of growth. A thriving middle class is the source of growth in a modern capitalist economy.

Our agenda must be focused on maximizing innovation and entrepreneurship in our economy by including as many people as possible, from every possible background. Understood in a 21st century way, diversity and participation are not a hindrance to growth, they are the key to growth. Market forces alone will not create the conditions nor provide the incentives that are necessary to maximize participation, sustain economic growth, create broadly based prosperity and ultimately, reduce income and wealth inequality. Consequently, we aim toward structural changes that will promote inclusion, including:

- **Increased wages and worker protections.** We aim in particular to see advances in the economic status of working class Americans, women, and people of color. We must close the wage gap and increase support for child development and family and care-taking responsibilities. Building on and protecting the landmark progressive victory of affordable health insurance, policy solutions include reform of wage laws, including the overtime pay threshold, wage theft, paid sick days, and pay equity, and providing quality childcare options. We must reduce or eliminate the incentive for employers to force workers into part-time work and contingent work. And we must aim to have life-long public and privately financed workforce development to meet the demands of a modern and changing economy.

Growing inequality — of income, wealth and political power — is an unmistakable and unsustainable cause and consequence of dangerous, outmoded “trickle down” economic policies.

The goal here is to advance an economic agenda that unites the middle class and working class, addresses broad economic insecurity, lifts up the needs of women and people of color, and provides a framework that places individual issues in a broader frame.

- Financial, regulatory, and other structural reforms that ensure the financial system invests in the people and businesses that will drive the economy of the 21st century and reduce the flow of talent and resources into unproductive aspects in the financial sector.
- Increased bargaining power of workers. To have lasting effect, public policy fights must be linked to efforts that build stable structures of worker power. Workers must have an effective voice in the workplace to win increased wages. Effective worker organization, in both existing and new forms, is an essential feature of an inclusive economy. We aim to see more women and people of color in leadership positions.
- Progressive taxation to fund the investments that serve and grow our economy. Wealthy individuals and corporations must contribute fairly to the shared assets of our economy, including education, transportation, childcare, public infrastructure, scientific research, and technology incubation and development. The corporate tax system in the U.S. is largely failing and needs to be fundamentally improved and restructured so that all corporations pay their fair share, and the corporate tax code should discourage excessive executive pay while encouraging investments in the U.S. economy.
- Access to high quality public education from preschool through college and beyond. Universal high quality early care and preschool, well-funded, highly effective K-12 schools for every American, affordable and adequately resourced college education, and resources for lifelong learning beyond or outside of college are just some of the needs of future generations to have the skills they need to succeed in the 21st century and to enable the economy to grow.

The strategy proposed here seeks to build organizational capacity among civil society groups to move more seamlessly and strategically between issue organizing and electoral work. The goal here is to advance an economic agenda that unites the middle class and working class, addresses broad economic insecurity, lifts up the needs of women and people of color, and provides a framework that places individual issues in a broader frame. The strategy focuses on state and local campaigns, but also seeks to engage more vigorously in regulatory fights that can have real and lasting impact. Building up organizations led by women and people of color is essential to the success of this strategy.

The recommended investment strategy has four interconnected lines of work:

- **Promote an inclusive economic agenda.**
 - > Reframe the economic debate to focus on policies that result in shared prosperity, including attention to wages and the dominant role of finance in our politics and economy.
 - > Ensure we have the intellectual infrastructure to support this agenda by supporting key progressive economic think tanks and continuing to explore new ideas.
 - > Forge stronger links between the economic agenda to other pillars of a strong economy, such as comprehensive immigration reform, public investments to both create jobs and address climate change, and investments in education and infrastructure.

- Focus resources on national, state, and local campaigns on both wages and financial reform.
 - > State and local campaigns must both make a difference in the lives of people and redefine the public's sense of what is possible in both economics and politics. These campaigns must also address the economic hardships of women and communities of color. Seattle's successful fight for a minimum wage of \$15 sets a new bar for progressives.
 - > Explore investments in a new wave of organizing around financial reform including addressing educational debt, the banking and financial services needs of underserved communities including communities of color, the foreclosure crisis, and executive compensation.
 - > Exploit opportunities to make meaningful structural reforms in the financial sector, including those created by the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau.
- Invest in and develop sustainable organizations that can build workers' bargaining power, challenge financial institutions, and generate grassroots political power. There are a number of national organizing networks that are well positioned to significantly scale up community and grassroots mobilization.
- Use DA's convening power to build support among state and federal elected officials for a progressive economic agenda.
 - > Invest in holding politicians of both parties accountable when they put corporations and Wall Street ahead of families.

ADDRESSING CLIMATE CHANGE

The rationale for the inclusion of climate in the DA's Vision 2020 framework is twofold. First, climate change presents a clear and dramatic threat to the earth's natural systems that support all life, including human communities. We do not have the luxury of waiting or hoping someone else will address it. We have a responsibility to act.

Second, the issue of climate change has become inextricably linked to issues of economic growth and democracy. Economic activity has exacerbated environmental degradation, providing perverse incentives for pollution, while climate change has exacerbated inequality. Poor urban communities are often hit the hardest from extreme weather phenomena such as Hurricanes Katrina and Sandy, while poor rural communities suffer when their lives and

water and land are destroyed by fracking and mountaintop removal. We must ensure that our strategies and solutions don't just bring further challenges, such as higher energy costs or reduced job opportunities, but provide new opportunities such as good jobs and improved health.

Moreover, the same powerful interests that contribute to climate change — namely the fossil fuel industry — are systematically undermining our democracy. The big contributors to a worsening climate have bought and paid for the Congress they want, and the same actors that are stalling progress on meaningful climate legislation are the very same actors who are interested in suppressing the vote, reducing worker rights, and manipulating public debate. Meaningful action on climate requires action on money in politics — and vice versa.

Climate change presents a clear and dramatic threat to the earth's natural systems that support all life, including human communities.

The failure to pass climate legislation in the 2009-10 Congress demonstrated that advocates lacked sufficient political power and influence to overcome the fossil fuel industry and its ideological allies. Particularly lacking was grassroots power in key states and sufficient alliances with and support from other progressive allies, including labor. Too little investment was made in elections, and the movement generally did not hold elected officials accountable for their positions on climate, even as climate denial became a dominant position for many in Congress. As setbacks often create opportunity, the climate bill failure catalyzed a critical rebuilding phase for the climate movement.

During the 2012 and 2014 election cycles, climate advocates started to go toe-to-toe with the fossil fuel industry, and candidates, voters and the political class are beginning to recognize the influence of climate donors and the issue. Organizing efforts blocked approval of the Keystone XL pipeline, and millions were mobilized in support of the first-ever carbon emissions standards for power plants. Thanks to the work of many leading organizations and donors, climate denial is becoming a political liability for more and more elected officials. And this fall, a crowd of 400,000 marched in the streets of New York supporting action on climate change, led not by environmentalists, but by young people of color, leaders from impacted indigenous communities, and labor.

This transformation of the climate movement, while nascent, has created needed political space for policy progress. President Obama has used his executive authority to move significant emission reduction policies at the federal level, dramatically reducing emissions from cars and trucks, and proposing the first carbon standards on new and existing coal-fired power plants. The Climate Action Plan released by the President in 2013 promises more progress during the final two years of the administration, but advocates anticipate huge pushback from an increasingly hostile Congress. At the state level, ALEC and others are working to systematically undermine the great strides made on climate and clean energy policy in recent years, while at the same time new opportunities are emerging to advance pro-climate policies in states.

Progress on climate policy must be accelerated to meet the dramatic change demanded by the science. The important progress made in the last four years serves as a foundation to grow an effective movement, deploy ever more powerful electoral and accountability tools, defend and advance policy progress, and expand alliances across the progressive movement.

The DA's climate agenda will seek to build the political power of the climate movement so that by 2020:

- The President and Congress are positioned to advance a national carbon pricing policy that achieves dramatic reductions in greenhouse gas emissions while, at the same time, addressing economic inequality.
- The U.S. is playing a global leadership role on climate change.
- States adopt ambitious new climate and clean energy policies, and defeat attacks on existing laws.
- The fossil fuel industry's influence on elections and policy is diminished.

Moving a strong climate agenda is fundamentally a political — not a policy — problem. Broad consensus exists on the need to secure a national price on carbon, but the real challenge is overcoming the fierce opposition of the fossil fuel industry and its allies on the Right. Building the political will to achieve the DA's agenda will require a more diverse, powerful and inclusive movement — one that unites impacted communities, workers, young people and environmentalists, and promotes the economic opportunities of a clean energy future.

The DA's recommended investment approach has three interconnected lines of work:

- **Engaging in elections and accountability.** The DA can play a critical role in helping to level the electoral playing field that for too long has been dominated by the Koch Brothers and the fossil fuel industry. Electing state and federal climate champions, defeating deniers, and holding elected officials accountable are powerful tools for change. These efforts might involve:
 - > Electoral activities and fundraising support for candidates who will lead on climate.
 - > Grassroots lobbying, advocacy, and accountability efforts.
 - > Supporting core state-based, civic engagement infrastructure, including additional investment in local and state-based organizations that organize in communities of color and other affected communities and have the ability to engage the New American Majority in electoral and issue advocacy campaigns.

Moving a strong climate agenda is fundamentally a political — not a policy — problem.

- Supporting campaigns to advance state/regional climate policies. This could include a wide range of issues, such as renewables and efficiency, carbon pricing, divest/invest campaigns, EPA regulation implementation, and transitioning communities to clean economy. Investments might include:
 - > State-based coalition building around key campaigns.
 - > Communications strategies to reach and engage core constituencies.
 - > Capacity building for place-based organizations focused on environmental and economic justice.
 - > State-based advocacy to defend against attacks on state and federal climate policy.

- Using the DA's unique convening power to bring key stakeholders together on a number of important issues and to help build relationships, problem solve, and identify future opportunities for collaboration, leverage, and action. This strategy might include:
 - > Building bridges between labor and environmental groups to ensure a just transition to a clean energy economy.
 - > Building coalitions at the national/state/local level to promote and advance issue campaigns. Aligning existing progressive infrastructure with existing environmental infrastructure.

As we operationalize our climate strategy, we will outline the core objectives and interim milestones so that we are better able to narrow the specific tactics needed for achieving these ambitious goals. For example, core objectives might include: advocacy around the United Nations Climate Conference in Paris December of 2015; making climate change a top tier issue in the 2016 Presidential race; defeating ALEC attacks on state climate and clean energy policy; holding climate deniers accountable; or building capacity of state/local organizations.

SUMMARY

Our job in the DA is to build political power so that policies can be put into place that improve people's lives, protect their rights, respect their dignity and identity, and foster health and justice. Given the current strength of the right wing both in Congress and the states and its growing financial might, our task is daunting. The recommendations in these pages seek to advance these ends.

This means focusing our attention on the states where the American people live and work and where political power is won and maintained. This does not mean abandoning national organizations but rather ensuring their vital work reaches more of the public. This means supporting the enhanced communications reach and impact of national organizations.

The resources of DA partners are limited while the need is great. While communications can reach all Americans, funding for more advanced infrastructure must go to the states where our marginal investment will have the greatest political and policy paybacks up and down the ballot over the next 6 years. Our effort must be coordinated with members of the Committee on States, founded by DA Partners in 2006, to build donor alliances in states. This will allow the resources national donors are committing to be matched by local donors who are intent on building the capacity of state based organizations and communications.

The DA's 2020 Vision grew out of conversations with dozens of progressive thinkers and leaders, and seven forums around the country in which more than 80% of the DA Partnership participated. We know that this must remain a dynamic process, requiring constant critical review, course correction, and open invitations to new ideas and voices. Even as we focus, we must remain nimble to deal with changing circumstances and emerging challenges and opportunities.

While a sharper focus and more ambitious vision has grown out of the inclusive and consultative process we have employed to develop our 2020 Vision framework, the DA will continue to be a platform -- through caucuses, donor tables and other vehicles -- for a range of Partner concerns outside the priorities established in the new strategy, such as gun violence, reproductive rights, criminal justice, marriage equality, foreign policy and immigration. Although we hope that the ultimate recommendation will inspire increased funding among DA Partners - helping to grow the pie from the approximately \$30 million in annual funding that has been provided to recommended organizations in recent years, we will also need to become more active ambassadors, sharing our 2020 Vision with other state and national donors, and building a solid base of support for an enduring progressive future that has a larger and even more passionate and committed DA at its core, but that has influence and impact well beyond our ranks.

We will...need to [build] a solid base of support for an enduring progressive future that has a larger and even more passionate and committed DA at its core...[and] influence and impact well beyond our ranks.
