

## CANDIDATE SPOTLIGHT September 2020

### Overall Deep Democracy 2.0 Context and Landscape



In the spring of this year, we at Maria's List laid out for you our strategy for the 2020 election cycle. Dubbed [Deep Democracy 2.0](#), it is a quantitative and qualitative approach that seeks to identify U.S. House and State House legislative districts that hold the potential for extraordinary Democratic turnout in November. By investing in these down-ballot candidates in areas with A) power-voting centers of people of color and B) areas with high levels of college-educated voters, we're hoping to boost turnout in low-propensity, high Democratic support regions in key swing states for the President and U.S. Senate races. We believe that by

supporting these community-driven, women-of-color down-ballot candidates, Democrats can accomplish meaningful progressive gains at the U.S. House and state level while providing the kind of turnout needed with low-propensity voters for Democrats to take back the White House and U.S. Senate. And with the Texas GOP leading the charge in suppressing the vote of Democratic voters in these key counties and cities, it's more important than ever to support community leaders on the ground who know how to implement key Get-Out-the-Vote programs across the state.

In Texas, we've identified two U.S. House and three Texas State House women-of-color candidates that are running progressive, grassroots campaigns that will excite the very voters Vice President Joe Biden and Senate candidate M.J. Hegar will need to win in November. By boosting the turnout of communities of color in partnership with the enthusiasm of college-educated voters in 2020, these candidates, campaigns, and regions can turn Texas blue up and down the ballot.

[Gina Ortiz Jones TX-23](#) (San Antonio, El Paso)

[Candace Valenzuela TX-24](#) (Dallas)

[L. Sarah DeMerchant TX-26](#) (Houston)

[Joanna Cattnach TX-108](#) (Dallas)

[Natali Hurtado TX-126](#) (Houston)

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**Gina Ortiz Jones**  
**TX-23 Congressional District (San Antonio, El Paso)**  
**Women of Color Democratic US House Pick Up**  
**Red to Blue Pick Up OPEN SEAT**

Raised by an immigrant single mother in San Antonio, **Gina Ortiz Jones** ([latest campaign advertisement](#)) is a former Air Force Vet, Boston University graduate, and national security expert that left the Trump administration once she realized that her expertise was endangered in this Administration. She decided to return home to San Antonio and run for Congress. Her perspective is that challenges we face are universal but opportunities are not. After graduating from Boston University with a BA and MA in Economics, and a BA in East Asian Studies, **Gina** entered the U.S. Air Force as an intelligence officer, where she deployed to Iraq and served under the U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. In the 12-years following her active duty service, **Gina** continued to build her career in national security, intelligence, and defense, serving as the Senior Advisor for Trade Enforcement, a position President Obama created by Executive Order in 2012. She would later be invited to serve as a Director for Investment at the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative where she led the portfolio that reviewed foreign investments to ensure they did not pose national security risks.

***On The Issues***

- The overarching policy message of **Gina's** campaign is one that seeks to close the gap between the economic outcomes of the more urban/suburban wealthy areas in her district versus the litany of very poor rural communities.
- On **health care**, **Gina** is a proponent of a public option as a means to ensuring universal health care and lowering prescription drug costs regardless of sex, age, income, or employment status. She is a champion of raising awareness surrounding maternal health, as Texas leads the developed world maternal mortality rates.
- **Immigration reform** is an issue near and dear to both **Gina's** hearts and the residents of the 23rd district. As a first-generation American, **Gina** understands that America was built by immigrants, and that reform of this broken system is a priority for her future constituents. Ensuring security and maintaining our values are not mutually exclusive for **Gina**, and she will bring a lens of needed empathy to Congress.
- As the daughter of a lifelong educator, **Gina** knows how critical **public education** is to the families of her district. That's why she is advocating for universal pre-K, increasing funding for STEM education, and protecting Federal resources for the most vulnerable and special needs students in her district.
- As a veteran, **Gina** understands that **climate change** is undoubtedly a national security issue. As a coastal state with an economy that relies on agriculture and ranching, Texas will feel the impacts of a changing climate.

**Gina** is advocating for new and innovative clean energy jobs and wants to lead on smart, data-driven climate change policies.

### ***Status of Race***

**Gina** ran for this seat in 2018, only losing to Will Hurd by a mere 900 votes. Hurd chose to resign from the position in early 2020, making this an open seat. The Republican primary dragged on well into August, as a recount was required to ultimately determine the winner, while **Gina** easily won the Democratic nomination in March without a runoff. She will face Tony Gonzales, who is endorsed by Donald Trump and is considered extremely conservative even for this traditionally Republican district.

The campaign has stuck to a weekly virtual town hall program since the beginning of the COVID19 pandemic. Since March, the campaign has hosted voters virtually every week, with quite a bit of engagement success. As a 2018 candidate, the campaign has had a very strong infrastructure with which to work in 2020. This has been key for both fundraising and voter outreach strategies. The campaign has been successful in its donor engagement, raising over \$4 million since mid-2019.

The campaign is focused on a county-based strategy: Bexar (San Antonio) will be where the majority of votes comes from, along with El Paso. They aim to compete and keep it close in the expansive rural counties in between.

The campaign is endorsed by a long list of progressive organizations including Emily's List, NARAL Pro-choice America, and Planned Parenthood Action Fund.

***Deep Democracy Dynamics of Race:*** Ortiz Jones is at the forefront of a long-seeded change movement in many regions across Texas, primarily being led by people of color, and women of color specifically. TX-23 is the state's only true swing congressional district, with a nearly evenly split between Republicans and Democrats. It stretches from El Paso to San Antonio and is more than 70 percent Hispanic. TX-23 is unique for [Deep Democracy 2.0](#), in that it is below average for college educated residents. However, it is 76% people of color, making it high above average for people of color, even in Texas.

**Ortiz Jones** easily won the nomination in the March primary. More notable was turnout: over 63,000 individuals voted in the district primary, compared to the prior presidential year 2016 that saw 48,000 votes. The 2018 general election with **Ortiz Jones** in TX-23 nearly matched the turnout of the 2016 presidential cycle without her, with only 18,000 fewer votes in 2018. With an ignited electorate up and down ballot, **Ortiz Jones** is poised to make up the 900 vote difference from her loss two years prior.

The campaign cited the [Texas Organizing Project \(TOP\)](#) as key actors for mobilization in Bexar County, as well as MOVE Texas for their voter registration efforts. TX-23 is a top priority for movement organizations we have previously highlighted, such as TOP and JOLT Texas.

**Campaign Status:** The campaign has been prolific in its fundraising, raising over \$4 million since mid-2019. As of the June 30th filing period, the campaign boasted over \$3 million cash-on-hand. Her opponent has only raised \$150,000 in individual donations, but has received over \$650,000 in PAC contributions in the first six months of 2020 alone. This leaves Gonzalez with over \$1 million cash on hand as of the June filing period.

[TX Candidates](#)

DONATE to CANDACE

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**Candace Valenzuela**  
**TX-24 Congressional District (Dallas)**  
**Women of Color Democratic US House Pick UP**  
**Red to Blue Pick UP OPEN SEAT**

**Candace Valenzuela** ([latest campaign advertisement](#))

is a mother, an educator, and a lifelong Texan. The daughter of U.S. Army veterans, **Candace** was born and raised in El Paso, Texas into a family with generations of military service. Her great-grandfather came to the United States from Mexico, eventually fighting in World War I. After her mother left the military, her family struggled financially and, for a time, experienced homelessness. They persevered, with **Candace** becoming the first member of her family to graduate from college. After school, **Candace** pursued work in education, including mentoring youth, tutoring, and working with special-needs students. In 2017, she was elected to the Carrollton-Farmers Branch Independent School District board as an at-large representative, defeating an 18-year incumbent. Since joining the board, she has been an advocate for greater fiscal transparency and worked to expand STEM education, vocational training, and coding academies in district schools. **Candace** is running against an incumbent Republican incumbent, who was a founding member of the Tea Party caucus.

### ***On the Issues***

- **Public Education** is a critical component of **Candace's** platform because she is a former educator and school board member. She is committed to funding and improving public education in the district. Amongst her education policy priorities is universal pre-K, investments in community colleges and vocational schools, fighting the Betsy Devos privatization agenda, increasing teacher salary and prioritizing the lifting of student debt for those teachers.
- **Health care** will be a constant topic on the trail in the next three months for the campaign. **Candace** has come out in support for a public option within the ACA, stopping short of supporting a government run single-payer system. She has made Medicaid expansion a top priority, along with the lowering of prescription drug costs.
- **Candace** is focused on **COVID19 policy** that brings immediate relief to residents during the ongoing pandemic. This means direct support for small businesses to maintain their payroll despite temporary closures,

fighting for direct federal investments in state and municipal budget gaps, and indefinite expansion of increased unemployment benefits.

- On **criminal justice reform**, **Candace** has come out in support of the congressional Justice in Policing act, which outlines a number of implementable reforms. She supports an all-civilian review board in the case of police misconduct, and federal incentives for the hiring of police forces that represent the communities in which they serve.

### ***Status of Race***

In a run-off primary, emerged from a crowded Democratic primary field that included the 2018 Democratic nominee. She placed second in the initial March primary with 30%, placing 11% behind the first place finisher. This made her resounding victory in the July run off all the more impressive, where she garnered over 60% of the vote to secure the nomination.

The campaign made the transition to all digital campaigns relatively seamless in light of COVID19. The campaign is emphasizing on building long-term progressive infrastructure within the district that has been sorely lacking from the state party in past years. This emphasis seemed to pay off in the two-person July run off, where turnout eclipsed the initial open Democratic primary total of 2018.

**Candace** has emphasized voter transparency and bringing those into the process who have typically left in the dark within Texas Democratic politics. The campaign has focused on training for first-time volunteers, providing wholesale political education on such topics like campaign finance. This has spawned several “micro-fundraisers” run by volunteers themselves.

The campaign boasts a remarkable slate of endorsements. They include: former President Barack Obama, Senator Kamala Harris, Senator Elizabeth Warren, Senator Cory Booker, Julian Castro, Representative Ayanna Pressley, Representative Deb Haaland, the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, the Congressional Progressive caucus, Emily’s List, the AFL-CIO of Texas, and The Working Families Party.

***Deep Democracy Dynamics of Race:*** TX-24 is a Deep Democracy district according to our Deep Democracy 2.0 framework. While slightly below average for non-white population compared to the statewide average, its college educated population is large, 17% higher than the statewide average. In 2018, Beto O’Rourke won the district outright with 51% of the vote total. The congressional vote totals have shifted even more rapidly. The GOP went from a comfortable double digit win in 2016 to merely winning the seat by 3% in 2018. It is safe to assume that the 2020 electorate will be more advantageous demographically for Democrats in 2020 compared to the 2018 electorate.

Texas-24 joins a number of Texas congressional districts that saw an explosion of voter turnout in the 2020 primary cycle. Over 59,000 people voted in the March congressional primary, more than doubling the turnout totals of 27,000 in 2018 and 2016. The July run off in 2020 even eclipsed those broader primary turnout

races of 2018 and 2016, with 33,000 voters participating in Valenzuela’s runoff victory.

TX-24 is a top priority for movement organizations we have previously highlighted, such as [Texas Organizing Project \(TOP\)](#) and [JOLT Texas](#). In addition to supporting **Candace**, TOP is targeting seven State house Races within the congressional district. JOLT Texas features four organizing chapters within Dallas County, making it one of the prime areas of engagement for the organization

**Campaign Status:** The campaign raised a very solid \$1.1 million from April 2019 through June 2020 filing period. However, with a crowded primary and competitive July run off, the campaign had a robust burn rate. As of the June 2020 filing period, the campaign reported \$110,000 cash-on-hand, essentially zeroing out the campaign funds prior to the July run off.

Her GOP opponent is similarly well-funded, with a reported raise of \$1.4 million up to the June 2020 filing period. With a less competitive primary however, the GOP ended with a better cash-on-hand total of \$483,000 as of the June 2020 filing period.

[TX Candidates](#)

DONATE to SARAH

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**L. Sarah DeMerchant**  
**TX-26 State House District (Houston)**  
**Women of Color Democratic Texas House Pick Up**  
**Red to Blue Pick Up OPEN SEAT**

Born in Houston, L. “Sarah” DeMerchant’s ([campaign advertisement](#)) family moved to House District 26 in search of good jobs and strong public schools. **DeMerchant** graduated from University of Houston-Downtown with a BBA in Computer Information Systems and from the University of Houston-Victoria with an MBA. She was the youngest Consulting Manager at a company that was the 3rd largest software company in Texas. She was previously the CTO of MazeTov.com and is currently responsible for business and technical operations as the Service Account Manager at one of the top 10 largest software development companies in the world. Since elementary school, she has always ran for some form of office, not out of ambition or desire to move up the ladder, but rather a strong desire to tackle problems that she believes she can fix. Early in her career she became aware of a wage gap in her salary. Following that experience, she became an equal pay for equal work advocate, later partnering with the Obama administration and the Shriver Report. Her software, Aequitas, was featured in the White House website for two years and won the Grand Prize and Women Innovation Mobile award from the U. S. Department of Labor Equal Pay app competition. **Sarah** is a member of AAUW-Fort Bend and is the chapter lead for Organizing for Action-Fort Bend (OFA). **Sarah** lives in New Territory with her husband, Fort Bend Precinct 4 County

Commissioner Ken DeMerchant, (graduate of Texas A&M University and a software engineer) and two children.

### ***On The Issues***

- On **public education**, **Sarah** is specifically focused on adequate funding and a teachers pay increase that is financially sound and sustainable rather than time-limited. This is in response to the Texas legislature passing a one-time for one year pay increase for teachers.
- On **health care**, **Sarah** is focused on maternal mortality for African American mothers, reproductive rights, and safe access to abortion. She is in favor of expanding the ACA to help with healthcare costs.
- **Sarah** is also prioritizing criminal justice issues. Specifically, she wants to be more proactive about the mental health needs of people in prison or are at high-risk of being incarcerated due to unmet health needs. She wants to invest in prevention, rehabilitation, and fairness for the judicial system.

### ***Status of Race***

This is **Sarah's** 3rd time running for this seat, falling just short in 2018 . In 2016, she ran unopposed in the Democratic primary but lost in the general election by over 10,000 votes, garnering 42.14%. In 2018, she once again ran unopposed in the primary, but she only lost by slightly over 3000 votes, garnering 47.6%. Both general elections had similar voter turnout total numbers. In 2016, when other campaigns weren't, **Sarah's** campaign put in strong efforts to reach out to the Asian-American community, a large demographic that is present in her district and is usually left out of voter outreach efforts. The campaign has only increased that level of outreach this cycle.

The Republican incumbent resigned in early 2020 after making racist comments regarding his Asian Republican primary opponent, making this an open seat. Her opponent, Jacey Jetton, is a 7th generation Texan and political newcomer running in his first election. He was previously a County GOP Chairman and is an Army Veteran.

**Sarah's** campaign has emphasized external partnerships, working with [Battleground Texas](#), an organization that helps support candidates of color, along with the [Fort Bend County Democratic Party](#) to increase voter registration. Her campaign has switched to primarily remote techniques for fundraising such as phone banking and texting teams. The campaign boasts a long list of endorsements including including, but not limited to, #VOTEPROCHOICE, Houston GLBT Caucus, AFL-CIO, and RUN Sister RUN.

**Deep Democracy Dynamics of Race:** HD-26 overlaps with the Congressional District TX-22, a priority Deep Democracy district being led by Democratic challenger Sri Preston Kulkarni. Since the 2012 election, the percentage won by the Democratic candidate (as well as overall voter turnout with the exception of 2014) has been steadily increasing. **DeMerchant's** first run in 2016 was the first time a Democratic candidate had broken the 40% threshold in several elections. Since then, her

margin of loss has steadily decreased. All Democratic candidates since 2012 have been women of color.

Fort Bend County is a priority Deep Democracy County, with 52% of residents college educated and 64% people of color. The campaign campaign is squarely centered in Fort Bend County, the top TX Deep Democracy County in all of Texas. This makes it one of the top Deep Democracy counties in the nation according to our [Maria's List framework](#). Additionally, she resides in TX CD-22, where [Sri Preston Kulkarni](#) is priority race for the Texas Organizing Project, as well as the DCCC. The house district is highly educated, making it a key turnout area for all Texas Democrats. These factors lead us to believe that this is a highly winnable flip district for Texas Democrats.

**Campaign Status:** The campaign has raised \$35,000 since the primary runoff which is a sharp increase from the roughly \$13,000 she had stated on her most recent FEC report filed on July 12, 2020. Her reported cash-on-hand amount is \$6,178; however that amount has also likely increased since the primary runoff. She estimates that 85-90% of her contributions are strictly from the community.

Her opponent is heavily funded by corporate PAC donations and lobbyist in-kind donations, along with heavy investment from current Texas Governor Greg Abbot.

[TX Candidates](#)

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**Joanna Cattanach**  
**TX-108 State House District (Dallas)**  
**Women of Color Democratic Texas House Pick Up**  
**Red to Blue Pick Up INCUMBENT CHALLENGE**

**Joanna Cattanach** ([campaign advertisement](#)) is a mother, educator, and former journalist/reporter from East Dallas, TX. A biracial Latina/white woman, as a young child she was placed into the foster care system and raised by a white family in a small, rural town called Blum (pop. 358) outside of Fort Worth. She emphasizes how her rural upbringing affects her campaign strategy today, especially living in one of the wealthiest districts in the state of Texas but not coming from that background personally. **Joanna** grew up separated from her Mexican heritage because of being a foster child and growing up in a white community; however, she values and celebrates her Mexican heritage. She emphasizes that she “looks like Texas will look moving forward.” She left home to pursue a college education at Baylor College in Fort Worth, earning a B.A. in Political Science and a Master’s in International journalism, making her a lifelong advocate of equitable education access. She then moved to Dallas to become a full-time journalist and reporter, cementing her commitment to freedom of press. **Joanna** is an educator with 10+ years of classroom experience teaching journalism and communications to college students. She notes that her personal experience of being a first-generation college student allowed her to fully “see” her students in a way they did not always recognize.

### ***On The Issues***

- **Cattanach** underscores **health care and Medicaid expansion** as critical issues to her district. HD-108 has one county hospital that sees uninsured patients, which is now serving three counties. All of this cost goes to Dallas taxpayers. **Cattanach** says that this is “more than a moral issue, but will have to keep working on it with this district because they all need to care about that, even if you’re insured.”
- **Redistricting** is an obvious priority to **Cattanach**, which she says “is the job of the legislature, which we have to do regardless of party.” According to her Sister District profile, **Cattanach** supports setting up an independent redistricting commission in Texas that will help end the practice of gerrymandering in the state.
- Her campaign also doubles down on the importance of funding **public education** equitably, holding **corporations accountable to environmental protection**, and making critical changes in the foster care system that make the process less discriminatory, and to ensure that children in the **foster care** system are given ample resources and support to excel.

### ***Status of Race***

In 2018, **Joanna** only lost this seat by 220 votes against her Republican opponent. Her grassroots campaign moved the district from a 20-point Republican advantage to one separated by just 220 votes after a recount. It was the largest margin gained by any state house candidate in Dallas County. The 2020 primary saw the highest voter turnout for a Democratic candidate in district history.

Morgan Meyer, an insurance attorney and **Joanna’s** opponent, has held the seat since 2014, when he defeated a Democratic challenger, Lee Bailey, with 60.7% of the vote. In 2016, he again won the seat against a Libertarian challenger, this time with 75% of the vote. Meyer is staunchly anti-choice, with a voting record that has earned him 4% from NARAL Texas. His anti-environment votes have earned him 29% from Sierra Club Lone Star, and his anti-LGBTQ votes have earned a 17% from Equality Texas. Conversely, the NRA has given him a 93% rating.

The campaign has prioritized phone banking, and has sent out 12,000 postcards due to volunteer demand. The campaign has begun a massive mail campaign now, and is transitioning the bulk of resources over to digital. **Joanna** describes her average voter is a 62-year-old white woman falling within “old Ann Richards Democrats.” She notes her ability to garner the youth vote as well. This seat is a swing seat and will continue to be, which means the campaign will have to win over Democrats that are low-propensity/progressive, and be cognizant of the moderate base. Joanna understands that she will need to give all parts of the district attention.

The campaign boasts a long list of impressive national endorsements, including Vote Pro Choice, the Sierra Club, Latino Victory Fund, National Democratic Redistricting Committee, Future Now Fund, Moms Demand Gun Action, and the Sister District Project.

**Deep Democracy Dynamics of Race:** Texas HD-108 is located in the northern-central portion of Dallas County, containing University Park, Highland Park and part of Dallas City. Notably, her district overlaps with Texas Congressional District 24, where fellow Maria’s List endorsee Candance Valenzuela is also challenging in a traditionally Republican-held seat. While the district is majority white, it is highly educated, making it a priority Deep Democracy District according to our [Maria’s List framework](#).

HD-108 was once the strongest Republican seat in the county, including a precinct that had the highest percentage of Trump support. HD-108 is moving towards blue, holding a tight red-blue split in 2018 with 49.7% voting Democrat for state legislatures versus 50.3% Republican. Beto O’Rourke won 57.15% of the vote in 2018. In 2016, Clinton won 50.3% of the vote to Trump’s 44.4%. In 2012, the district overwhelmingly voted for Mitt Romney, winning 58.9% over 39.3% for Obama, providing an obvious trend.

This is a priority flip district for the [Texas Organizing Project](#).

**Campaign Status:** As of August 11, 2020, the campaign had raised just upwards of \$200,000. Per their July 15 filing, the campaign had \$122,179.85 cash on hand, had spent \$65,495.18 and had raised \$181,290.78 in campaign contributions. Her opponent had \$247,710.00 in political contributions, had spent a total of \$107,924.45, and had \$517,790.49 cash on hand as of his July 15 filing. His biggest contributors are insurance companies, gun PACs, and pro-life PACs.

[TX Candidates](#)

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**Natali Hurtado**

**Tx-126 State House District (Houston)**

**Women of Color Democratic Texas House Pick Up  
Red to Blue Pick Up INCUMBENT CHALLENGE**

**Natali Hurtado** is the Deputy Executive Director for the International Management District with the consulting firm Hawes Hill & Associates. Her work involves improving the district through public safety initiatives, environmental and urban design projects and community development programs. She has a

BA in Psychology and Political Science from University of Houston and a Master of Public Policy and Administration from the University of St. Thomas. She is a first generation born and raised in Houston, Texas. She comes from a blue-collar family. Her father was an immigrant sailor from Uruguay and her mother was an asylum-seeker from Honduras. She was married at the young age of 19 and subsequently became a mother at 20. Following her first husband’s life sentence to prison for a crime committed before their marriage, **Natali** became a single mother dependent on food stamps and Medicaid to support her child while also attending university. She largely relied on her parents for childcare support in

order to balance her studies. Her path to public service began by interning at the City of Houston and at the local office of Congressional District 29. She was a campaign assistant for a Harris County Civil District Court candidate and District Director for a Texas State House Representative (for the same district she is currently running for). After that, she started her current job in a consulting firm. Although initially not invested because of her desire to work with and for people, she realized that economic development and small business support can help others who live in the same neighborhood.

### ***On The Issues***

- On **health care**, **Natali** is a staunch supporter of Medicaid expansion, having grown up on the program. She is a strong defender of reproductive rights and supports expanded access for women's health care.
- Her campaign is laser focused on issues of local **small business** retention in the midst of the COVID-19 epidemic. Businesses are leaving the district and there are many vacant spaces. As someone with deep knowledge in economic development strategies, she believes she has the experience to revitalize her community and bring in new businesses.
- With respect to **public education**, **Natali** and her kids are a product of public schools. Her specific policy priorities in this area would be to decrease the technology gap, increase teacher and other staff salaries, and lessen the amount of money that has been funneling into charter schools.

### ***Status of Race***

This is **Natali's** second time running for this district. In 2018, she won the Democratic primary in a landslide race but lost to the Republican incumbent by 5,364 votes, garnering around 45.2% of the vote. **Hurtado's** opponent, E. Sam Harless, has been the State Representative of this district since 2018. From 2007-2017, his wife, Patricia Harless, was the State Representative of this district.

Her campaign has since shifted to all virtual events and communications in light of COVID-19. She has done joint fundraising events with other candidates, Elizabeth Beck and Akilah Bacy, to help expand outreach. She has partnered heavily with [Flip the Texas House](#), an organization that was also heavily involved in Beto 'O'Rourke's Senate campaign, to help with voter registration. In 2018, she primarily focused on getting her name and message out during the primary. Now, she's focusing on voter registration. The campaign is targeting large apartment complexes that were left unengaged due to a lack of resources in 2018.

The campaign has a long list of endorsements from notable organizations such as, but not limited to, Annie's List, the Houston Chronicle, Texas AFL-CIO, Planned Parenthood Texas Vote, Houston GLBT Political Caucus, Emily's List, Sierra Club, SwingLeft. Former President Barack Obama also endorsed her campaign.

***Deep Democracy Dynamics of Race:*** Texas HD-126 is a part of Harris County and encompasses the city of Houston and the greater Houston Metro Area. Harris

County is a top Deep Democracy county according to our [Maria's List framework](#). The district also overlaps with the 2nd Congressional District, a designated Deep Democracy district being led by Democratic nominee [Sima Ladjevardian](#). HD-126 has been rapidly diversifying, going from a majority white district to majority people of color in a short amount of time.

This is a priority flip district for the Texas Organizing project. Our other key Texas organizational endorsee, JOLT Texas, boasts a number of organizing chapters in Harris County and is focused on turning out the Latino community in Houston this election cycle.

**Campaign Status:** As of August 12, 2020, the campaign had raised \$142,088 and spent \$46,400, including for the Democratic primary. As of the July 15th filing report, the campaign reported \$66,783.55 cash on hand. As of his July 15 filing report, **Natali's** opponent had claimed \$28,914.85 in political contributions, spending only a total of \$2965.25, with \$124,052.21 cash on hand.