



Maria's List 2018: Framework and Analysis for Giving

The emergence of Trump did not begin in 2016, it is connected to decades of lost Democratic seats at the local, legislative, judicial, and state level. Democrat control of state legislatures and governor's office is the lowest since the 1900s. In 2008, Dems controlled 59 percent of state legislatures, while now they control only 31 percent. Looking at the same time period, Democrats held 29 governor's offices and now have only 16. We also must be cautious of holding the Electoral College solely responsible. Democrats lost well over 1,000 seats over the course of the Obama Administration, most of which do not involve the Electoral College. By successfully redrawing districts, Republicans have tilted the electoral map to their benefit, but the party is losing seats.

In this political climate, if progressives want to win governance power, we must first, recognize that conventional political funding that has contributed to this current landscape. Most political spending is dedicated to TV ads that does not turnout nearly 60 percent of the Democratic base, the American Rising Electorate (millennials, people of color, unmarried women). It's only aimed at the swing voters. Most importantly, we must give **early** financial support to elect **bold** progressive women and people of color, while also investing in increasing the **turnout of our base**. With current Midterm elections as well as the 2020 census and 2021 redistricting looming, we need some control of that process or it gets structurally harder.

Traditional electoral investment has focused on recapturing mythical white working class voters at the neglect of working class in communities of color and women. To win over the near and long term, messaging needs to be more carefully robust/mindful. The good news, is that this work is underway:

- For nearly two decades, Democratic party candidates for Governor of Massachusetts followed this thinking, only to be upended by Deval Patrick, who defeated the establishment Democrat in 2006 and again in 2010, when he defeated Charlie Baker - the current Governor of MA - buoyed by a strong coalition of people of color and working-class people;
- Using the same play book, in 2014, Attorney General Maura Healey, defeated a labor and establishment candidate;
- In 2016, Bernie Sander's insurgent democratic campaign that relied on millennials (except people of color);

- In 2017, special and state elections in Alabama and Virginia as well as two major urban cities electing two black women as Mayor, in Atlanta, Keisha Lance Bottoms and LaToya Cantrell in New Orleans (first Black woman to ever serve in this capacity);
- Now, we see women and people of color candidates following this formula across the country
- Andrew Gillum, the former Mayor of Tallahassee, who sued the NRA and won, is gaining momentum in his race for Governor of Florida, emerging as one of two frontrunners in a crowded Democratic primary;
- Texas- 23 primary, witnessed first time candidate, Gina Ortiz Jones, top a crowded Democratic primary - surprising everyone but her supporters!

In 2018, you should expect to learn more about exciting candidates and grassroots organizations that are focused on the transformation of the electoral landscape by promoting a progressive platform into the Democratic mainstream. Specifically, we are targeting states where amplified synergy exists across several key factors: progressive ballot questions, 501c3 and 501c4 voter engagement efforts, and women and people of color on the ballot. Our research and political experience has taught us that when this scale of deep democracy exists, we are more competitive as Democrats and we increase the likelihood of victory. Using this lens, Maria's List will prioritize candidates and grassroots organizations engaged in federal, state, and local races in Florida, Georgia, Michigan, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, Nevada, New Mexico, and Texas.

A win or a good vote, is no longer enough, progressives must be bold if we are to achieve real governance power over the long term to address rising income inequality, institutional racism, and gender inequality. Our aspirations are what drive us out to vote and even to run: an economy that provides opportunity to all, public education that prepares all our talented young people for productive lives, and an environment that has clean air, water and stable predictable weather.