

America Votes State Summit 2017

February 14-15, 2017

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

801 Mt. Vernon Place NW

Washington, DC



State Summit 2017 Agenda

The America Votes State Summit 2017 gathers at a time of unprecedented challenge for progressives and our country. A nationalist demagogue with no understanding or respect for democracy and functional government now sits in the White House, and the most extreme conservative policies we've battled in the states are now driving the agenda in Congress.

The question all of us are asking is where do we go from here? What critical actions of resistance will effectively defend our priorities, values, institutions, and protect vulnerable communities? And how can our actions right now advance strategies to build back power and move us toward future victories? This State Summit seeks to address these questions by balancing priorities for real-time action and analysis at this critical moment with longer-term power-building and strategies for victories in 2018 through 2020 and into the next decade from the local and state-level up.

Times and sessions are subject to change

Tuesday, February 14

10:30 am – 4:30 pm **Registration Check-In Open**

11:30 am **Lunch Served**

12:00 pm – 12:30 pm **America Votes State Summit 2017: Now More Than Ever...**

What progressives need, now more than ever, is resilience - the resilience of a strong progressive campaign coalition ready to stand up to resist our opponents' attempts to divide our people, roll back our rights, and attack our democracy. In this opening session, **Sara Schreiber** (America Votes) and **Greg Speed** (America Votes) discuss what to expect over the next two days, how this year's conference is both tailored to the moment and focused on the long-game, how the America Votes coalition has been working in greater scale and coordination than ever before, and the importance of applying the lessons of last year to our work going forward.

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm **Where We Are Now... What We Need to Carry Forward**

Last year's election was shocking, but the results also continued a long-term trend of decline among voters living beyond progressive bastions. The limitations and the strength of the "Obama coalition" were seen in an election that saw both a three million popular vote margin for Hillary Clinton and 304 electoral votes for Donald Trump. Progressives now need to identify the right lessons from 2016 that must be applied going forward to win by confronting long-standing challenges. We will craft this strategy at the beginning of a new political era in which Trump will be the dominant presence and Republicans control every level of government - creating new opportunities to mobilize progressives' vital core constituencies while expanding our appeal.

This "scene-setting" discussion will feature perspectives of **Guy Cecil** (Priorities USA Action), **Maria Teresa Kumar** (Voto Latino), **Mike Podhorzer** (AFL-CIO), leaders in articulating the path forward for the progressive movement and the Democratic Party, and moderated by **Lisa Prosienski** (America Votes-ME/Maine Votes) offering perspective her state table's experience in confronting "Maine's Trump," Governor Paul LePage.

- 1:30 pm – 2:30 pm** **Severe Threats & Vital Responses Right Now**
Donald Trump has brought a dizzying daily onslaught of assaults on our policies, values and upon the institutions and basic norms of American democracy. Less than one month into the Trump administration, and with every day seemingly bringing a new low, how do progressives respond strongly and effectively while maintaining resiliency and building toward a long-term strategy? This session will provide a big-picture look at the executive, legislative, and judicial agendas of Trump, congressional Republicans and arch-conservatives, and how progressive organizations are responding to them. Panelists **Ellen Nissenbaum** (Center on Budget & Policy Priorities), **Deirdre Schifeling** (Planned Parenthood Action Fund), **Dorian Warren** (Center for Community Change Action), and **Elizabeth B. Wydra** (Constitutional Accountability Center) will bring a broad array of experiences and perspectives on the very hard road ahead and effective strategies for advocacy and organizing to such enormous threats.
- 2:30 pm – 2:35 pm** **The Power of Convening: Introduction for Breakout Sessions**
Before breaking into smaller groups, **Seth Johnson** (AFSCME/America Votes Board Chair) will discuss the goal of engaging the collective experience and diverse perspectives of Summit participants through breakout discussions: Critical Actions & Organizing in Resistance.
- 2:35 pm – 2:45 pm** **Break**
- 2:45 pm – 4:00 pm** **Breakout Discussions: Critical Actions & Strategies for Organizing in Resistance**
These discussions will focus on what America Votes partners and the progressive community must do to effectively respond and organize to the challenges posed by the Trump administration and right-wing Republican majorities in states and Congress.
- Each discussion will be started-off and moderated by national and state organizational leaders. Respondents and participants will discuss their efforts and ideas in key areas of resistance to right-wing takeover of America including:
- Discussion #1**
Led by **Ilyse Hogue** (NARAL Pro-Choice America) and **Kenia Morales** (America Votes Nevada)
Initial Topic: Protecting & Strengthening Progressive Organizations
- Discussion #2**
Led by **Khalid Pitts** and **Rachelle Netzer** (United Food and Commercial Workers)
Initial Topic: Winning While Out of Power – Legislative, Legal and Other Strategies
- Discussion #3**
Led by **Carrie H. Pugh** (National Education Association) and **Jessica Walls-Lavelle** (America Votes Pennsylvania)
Initial Topic: Resistance Messaging to Mobilize Progressives & Expand Our Reach
- Discussion #4**
Led by **Seth Johnson** (AFSCME) and **Amanda Brown** (For Our Future)
Initial Topic: Forging New Partnerships, Innovative Programs and Tools
- Discussion #5**
Led by **Deepak Pateriya** (Center for Community Change Action) and **JoDee Winterhof** (Human Rights Campaign)
Initial Topic: Protecting & Engaging Vulnerable Communities

- 4:00 pm – 4:15pm** **BREAK**
- 4:15 pm – 4:45pm** **From the Frontlines: On the Hill & in a Changing State**
To conclude the day with a perspective on the many fights ahead **Sarah Michelsen** (Arizona Wins) will introduce **U.S. Rep. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)**. Rep. Gallego has been a leading voice of strong opposition to the Trump administration. An Iraq War veteran and leader on issues including voting rights and gun violence prevention, Rep. Gallego also brings the perspective of a former state legislator elected in the wake of the discriminatory H.B. 1070 and a leading voice as the politics of immigration have evolved nationally and in Arizona.
- 4:45 pm – 5:15 pm** **Charting the Course: Breakout Discussion Reports**
Following individual breakouts, discussion leaders will be joined by **Keith Mestrich** (Amalgamated Bank) to offer highlights from each session and perspectives on critical next steps.
- 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm** **Cecile Richards Progressive Leader Award Reception**
Honoring Lee Saunders, AFSCME President with Remarks from Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-OH)
Hosted at the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, 25 Louisiana Ave NW, Washington, D.C.
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Wednesday, February 15

- 8:30 am – 1:00 pm** **Registration Opens & Breakfast Served**
- 9:00 am – 9:30 am** **Victory Starts Now: Election Maps & State Paths to Power**
In 2018, campaigns for critical gains in gubernatorial seats and the U.S. Senate are intertwined with overlapping battleground state maps setting the stage for midterm election that could significantly impact Congress and power in the states. In this session, **Lucinda Guinn** (EMILY's List) will review the landscape and 2017 and 2018 election maps and discuss key considerations in planning for the fights ahead. **Katie Kelly** (America Votes Michigan) will review the "Building a Path to State Power" roadmaps developed by America Votes across our state network detailing top state-level priorities for what must happen in 2017 to win power in the states in 2018 and beyond.
- 9:30 am – 10:00 am** **First Line of Defense: A View from the Senate**
Wisconsin has been at the center of our political debate since the state, a laboratory of so many progressive policies in the last century, was seized by Scott Walker and extreme conservatives in 2010. **U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin's (D-WI)** resounding election in 2012 showed that a strong leader offering a strong progressive agenda can resonate across the state, but the 2016 election saw many rural counties that supported Senator Baldwin and President Barack Obama sharply shift in support for President Donald Trump. Senator Baldwin will be introduced by **John Grabel** (AFSCME/For Our Future) and joined in conversation by **Alexis Anderson-Reed** (Funders' Committee on Civic Participation).
- 10:00 am-10:05 am** **2017 State Priorities to Build the Path to Power**
Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler (AFL-CIO) joins us in the main room as we introduce the breakout sessions focused on key components of our work this year as we build back power in the states.

10:05 am – 10:15 am **Break**

10:15 am – 11:30 am **Breakout Sessions: 2017 State Priorities to Build the Path to Power**

Fighting Forward on Voting Rights

The systematic conservative assault on voting rights continues in the states with new national threats to democracy under the Trump administration, including its preposterous lies about “voter fraud.” As we face unprecedented attempts to roll back voting rights in legislatures and now an exceptionally unstable federal landscape, panelists **Brittanie Baker** (Fair Elections Legal Network), **Commissioner Tom Hicks** (Election Assistance Commission), **Patrick Schuh** (America Votes Michigan), **Melinda Gibson** (The Center for Modern and Secure Elections) and **Sabrina Kahn** (Advancement Project) will explore what to expect and how to fight back voter suppression, reclaim the narrative and expand voting rights. Panelists will also discuss successful proactive tactics to modernize elections as well case studies where, even in the minority, we fought back and won.

Activating Talent: Developing Power In-House & Building External Leaders

Developing our staff, members, volunteer leaders and board members to run for office requires short and long term strategies. There are specific ways you can mentor, coach and identify new talent to transform your engagement ladder. Meanwhile leadership and candidate pipelines are emerging arms of progressive infrastructure that can plug into your organizing programs. This interactive session will explore how to approach people to work at your organization, where to look, strategies to develop leaders into candidates and organizations to partner with to make it happen. Speakers include **Mindy Mazur** (Hired Up! Missouri), **Sean Kolaskar** (New Leaders Council), **Misha Barnes** (LEAD OH), **EJ Juárez** (Amplify WA), and **Clare Bresnahan** (She Should Run).

Organizing & Power-Building in Resistance

From airports to district offices to campuses to city halls to 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., massive protests in strong opposition to Trump’s unprecedented assaults move forward every day. Public demonstrations of resistance and disruptions are emerging from an organic groundswell at the grassroots and online – bringing together an intersection of people united in opposition to Trump and commitment to protecting our communities and shared values. What are effective strategies for leveraging the energy of the moment for maximum impact and long-term capacity? Speakers include **Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler** (AFL-CIO), **Tomas Robles** (Living United for Change in Arizona), **Nadia Aziz** (Arab American Institute), and **Ezra Levin** (Indivisible).

Going Local: 2017 Elections

Odd-year elections for local offices and statewide races take on added importance in the first year of a new administration. With progressives’ growing strength in winning elections and passing significant policy at the local level, 2017 presents opportunities to showcase energy and opposition to Trump at the ballot-box and advance a proactive agenda in localities across the country. This session will highlight effective tactics behind recent successful local races that have delivered significant policy victories. We will delve into tactics that are unique to local races, including messaging and targeting, with a special focus on key offices for criminal and social justice such as county attorneys and county sheriffs. Speakers include **Sarah Michelsen** (Arizona Wins), **Josh Ulibarri** (Lake Research), **Viri Hernandez** (Center for Neighborhood Leadership), **Bob Fulkerson** (Progressive Leadership Alliance of Nevada Action), and **Miguel Avitia** (America Votes New Mexico).

11:30 am – 12:00pm Break / Lunch Served

12:00 pm – 12:30pm Lunch Program: New Data & Messaging for a New Landscape

Every day of the Trump Administration has brought a bewildering level of executive and legislative assaults, enormous conflicts and fresh controversies – it's nearly impossible (and probably unhealthy) to keep up with it all. However, little is yet known about what is actually breaking through, and what it means for messaging in the new landscape. **Anna Greenberg** (Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research) will present polling recently out of the field joined by **Dawn Boudwin** (America Votes) to lead a discussion with participants.

12:30 pm – 1:30 pm DATA! Opportunity or Overload?

2016 saw a continued increase in reliance upon analytics to inform strategy and decision-making. This session will be a facilitated discussion among seasoned experts about the polling and modeling in 2016 and how progressives used it to guide strategy and program investments.

Topics will include the roles polling, modeling and analytics played in informing mail, media and field programs in 2016, how these targeting tools aligned with real-time voter contact data over the course of the campaign and key takeaways for building strong, integrated targeting systems moving forward. Speakers include **Annie Wang** (Analyst Institute), **Matt Lackey** (Civis), **Jenny Lawson** (Planned Parenthood Action Fund), **Michael Frias** (Catalist), and **Anna Greenberg** (Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research).

1:30 pm – 2:30pm 2018 Midterm Planning: Will Past Be Prologue? Or a Whole New Ballgame?

Progressives are scrambling to re-write the playbook for the 2018 midterm, but the last three midterm elections have brought landslide losses for the party in control of the White House. Will the trend continue in the age of Trump?

This session will host a forward-looking discussion with strategists bringing a variety of perspectives on the 2018 political landscape, midterm voting trends, and critical considerations that must guide the next two years of planning and program. Speakers include **Khaled Salehi** (America Votes Ohio), **Tom Bonier** (TargetSmart), **Corey Platt** (Democratic Governors Association), and **Leslie Martes** (League of Conservation Voters).

2:30 pm – 2:45 pm Break

2:45 pm – 3:45 pm Breakout Sessions: Proven Partnerships & Strategies for Victory

Accountability at Every Level

From state legislatures to the U.S. Senate, several 2016 accountability campaigns effectively cut through and defined our opponents and the issue environment in a deeply cluttered presidential election year. Looking ahead, what will effective accountability look like in a midterm election with a myriad of primaries and Trump likely to be the defining personality? This panel will look at national and state partner programs to drive debate, define the opposition and capture the moment. Speakers include **Dave McGongale** (America Votes Minnesota), **Zach Stewart** (Americans for Responsible Solutions), **Jessica Laurenz** (America Votes North Carolina), **Chris Sgro** (Equality NC), and **Rachel Kaygi** (GSSA).

Cracking the Code on Digital

Digital played a larger role in 2016 than ever before and that trend will continue. Panelists will discuss what strategies, creative and targeting worked for digital persuasion campaigns from presidential, federal and downballot in 2016. Speakers include **Amy Gonzalez** (Blueprint), **Tara McGowan** (Priorities USA), **Eric Ming** (For Our Future), **Arissa Brown** (Planned Parenthood PA Advocates & PAC), and **Heather Hargreaves** (NextGen Climate).

Organizing for Long-Term Engagement

Many partner organizations' 2016 field and voter mobilization efforts were designed with goals of long-term engagement and powerbuilding. The severe threats from Trump administration edicts and conservatives' policies now create an imperative to organize actions and engagement to protect vulnerable and under-represented communities. This session will look at effective powerbuilding programs from 2016 with long-term goals for community engagement on issues and elections. Speakers include **Dawn Boudwin** (America Votes), **Gariety Pruitt** (AFL-CIO Nevada), **Lizzy Stephan** (New Era Colorado), **Marci McLean** (Montana Native Vote), and **Kwesi Chappin** (Color of Change PAC).

360 Table Strategies for Governor's Races

Gubernatorial races are of preeminent importance to partners in the states and will take on even greater national priority in the final midterm before redistricting. America Votes state tables have tested strategies for effectively engaging at every stage of a gubernatorial campaign over a two-year cycle and connecting in-state partners and stakeholders with national interests and resources. This session will look at America Votes states' effective past models and current planning for programs over the next 21 months to elect progressive governors on November 6, 2018. Speakers include **Josh Geise** (America Votes Florida), **Denise Cardinal** (Win Minnesota), **Shirin Bidel-Niyat** (AFSCME), **Eric Rosso** (PA Spotlight), and **Chris Laslovich** (Montana Votes).

3:45 pm – 4:00 pm

Break

4:00 pm – 5:00 pm

The Road to 2022: Redistricting Strategy from the States Up

Progressives are getting our acts together on redistricting. Over the last two years we've seen major legal victories stemming from many different strategies, progressive majorities elected to supreme courts in the key states of North Carolina and Pennsylvania, and a focused electoral effort by national partners and funders on the top priority states to impact redistricting. 2018 will be a critical year in the courts and at the ballot box for future redistricting. This session looks at redistricting strategy nationally and through the lens of a state where partners have worked together on a full complement of voting rights, reform and electoral strategies to undo conservatives' partisan and racial gerrymanders. Speakers include **Greg Speed** (America Votes), **Kelly Ward** (National Democratic Redistricting Committee), **Allison Riggs** (Southern Coalition for Social Justice), and **Jessica Laurenz** (America Votes North Carolina).

5:00 pm – 5:45 pm

Wrapping Up, Getting to Work: Key Insights & Next Steps

The Summit will conclude with a review of the most critical priorities and insights from the preceding sessions and large-group discussion of our vital work going forward. This structured review and discussion will provide an opportunity for real-time observation and discussion of America Votes and allies' work ahead in states this year.

5:45 pm – 7:00 pm

Closing Happy Hour Sponsored by EveryAction

Baby Wale, 1124 9th St. N.W. (across the street from the Washington Convention Center)