

## America Votes State Summit 2018

February 27-28, 2018

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

801 Mt. Vernon Place NW

Washington, D.C.



# America Votes State Summit 2018 Agenda

*\*Check back or [download the app](#) for updates to panelists and locations\**

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## Tuesday, February 27

**10:30 AM:** Registration Open (until 4:30 PM)

**11:30 AM:** Lunch Served

**12:00 PM:** Welcome: America Votes 8<sup>th</sup> Annual State Summit  
**Sara Schreiber**, Managing Director, America Votes

**12:15 PM – 12:40 PM:** **Perspectives: The Power of Collaboration & Coordination in #Resistance**

Over America Votes' 15-year history, the work of the progressive community, partner organizations and campaigns has been transformed by our enduring mission and model of partnership and collaboration in the states. Today, we know that coordination of allies isn't merely a virtue, it's a core component of strategies for victory and power-building. This was clear throughout 2017, a year of strong #Resistance, state and local victories and collective planning for bigger wins ahead.

To kick-off this year's State Summit, we'll hear from three outstanding state-based leaders who have forged paths toward progress over the past year.

**Speakers include:**

**Juan Gallegos Erives**, Director of Civic Engagement and Legal Services, Colorado Immigrant Rights Coalition

**Taryn Hallweaver**, Legislative Director, Maine People's Alliance

**Desmond Meade**, President, Florida Rights Restoration Coalition

**12:40 PM:** **Introductory Remarks**  
**Greg Speed**, President, America Votes

**12:50 PM – 1:45 PM:** **476 Days Later: Resistance, Perseverance & Opportunity in the Trump Era**

Each of the nearly 500 days since November 8, 2016 has brought news of great challenge, frustration and dismay. We've also seen countless examples of strong resistance and perseverance, of communities rallying in support and defense of their own and for others and of progressives energized and mobilized to defeat our opponents at every opportunity and building towards the most consequential midterm election in history.

This panel discussion led by **Jamelle Bouie, Slate and CBS News Political Analyst**, and four progressive organizational leaders will hit the pause button and consider all that has happened in our country since 2016. The panel will consider the impact of the Trump era on each of their groups (both new and long-standing) and missions, the progressive movement generally and the moral and strategic imperatives heading towards the November midterm and beyond.

**Speakers include:**

**Glynda Carr**, Co-Founder, Higher Heights for America  
**Jessica Post**, Executive Director, Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee  
**Maria Urbina**, Political Director, Indivisible  
**JoDee Winterhof**, Senior Vice President for Policy and Political Affairs, Human Rights Campaign

**1:50 PM – 2:50 PM: 252 Days Ahead: Maps, Voters, Trends & Strategies in 2018**

The 2018 midterm presents enormous opportunities at many levels – from electing congressional majorities to hold President Donald Trump and Republicans accountable to winning in the states to move forward progressive policies and build power through the next decade in post-2020 redistricting. With so much at stake, this session will review the various 2018 maps for power, the ongoing planning to win at every level and messages and strategies for voter engagement in the Trump era, anticipating the worst attacks from our opponents and the need to mobilize progressives and expand our support to more districts and key regions.

**Speakers include:**

**Matt Barreto**, Co-Founder, Latino Decisions  
**Shirin Bidel-Niyat**, Assistant Director, Political Action, AFSCME and Chair, For Our Future  
**Stan Greenberg**, Founding Partner, Greenberg Research  
**Jessica Laurenz**, North Carolina State Director, America Votes  
**Martha McKenna**, Partner, McKenna Media

**2:50 PM – 3:10 PM: Break**

**3:10 PM – 4:20 PM: Breakout Sessions: Digging Deeper into 2018**

Breakout discussions will dive into strategies for meaningful, effective engagement of critical communities throughout this year and beyond and several critical issues likely to be central to the debate in the midterm election.

***#dontbeboing2018: Engaging Youth Voters to Build a Winning and Lasting Majority***

This session will provide an overview of the power of the youth vote in previous and future elections. Creative work happening in the country will be highlighted, with an emphasis on tactic-layering and breaking down barriers between digital and field work. Staff from youth vote organizations focused in Minnesota, Miami, Ohio and nationally will also talk about connecting issues to candidates and ballot measures in a way that is authentic and persuasive.

**Speakers include:**

**Sarah Audelo**, Executive Director, Alliance for Youth Action  
**Prentiss Haney**, Executive Director, Ohio Student Association  
**Emily Wellen**, Minnesota Political and Field Director, America Votes  
**Ben Wessell**, Director, NextGen Rising  
**Ariel Sepulveda**, Organizing Director, Engage Miami

***An Absolute Imperative: Engaging & Mobilizing African-Americans in 2018's Battlegrounds***

Although often marginalized by campaign "strategists," authentically and credibly engaging the African-American community and building long-term capacity is absolutely critical to any successful progressive campaign. In 2018, voter engagement and mobilization in black communities is a strategic imperative across every battleground state with overlapping key races for governor and the U.S. Senate, such as Florida, Michigan, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Simply put, the level of investment in authentically activating black voter participation will determine state

power and redistricting for the next decade and perhaps also the majority in the U.S. Senate. This panel will explore the central importance of the African-American electorate and key strategies for successful engagement at the national and state level.

**Speakers include:**

**Jessica Byrd**, Co-Founder, Electoral Justice Project by the Movement for Black Lives

**Quentin James**, Co-Founder, Collective PAC

**Angela Lang**, Executive Director, Black Leaders Organizing for Communities (BLOC)

**Adrienne Shropshire**, Executive Director, BlackPAC

**Leslie Small**, Executive Director, Georgia Engaged

***Shifting States & Expanding Maps: Building Power in Nevada and Arizona***

In two states with rapidly changing demographics and critical opportunities to gain U.S. Senate seats, this session will review strategies for engaging the fastest growing communities. This discussion will dive into the landscape in Arizona and Nevada, both growing, diversifying states where engagement of communities of color, including Latinx and AAPI communities, is essential for victory in 2018, defeating conservatives' divisive race-based attacks and to long-term power-building.

**Speakers include:**

**Joon I. Kim**, Partner, New Paradigm Strategy Group

**Kenia Morales**, Nevada State Director, America Votes

**Sarah Michelsen**, State Director, Arizona Wins!

In formation

***It's \*Always\* the Economy – Taxes, the Safety Net and Organizing in States***

A strong, focused and broadly appealing economic message is essential for progressives, and the GOP tax plan creates both enormous opportunities and challenges in 2018. Research continually shows the economy is the top concern of both the progressive base and "swing voters" – and neither voting bloc has been satisfied with Democratic candidates' messages. This session will dive into the practical impact of the disastrous GOP tax plan, focusing on specific states as well as organizing and messaging opportunities on the tax bill and other broader economic concerns.

**Speakers include:**

**Kristen Crowell**, Deputy Director of State Strategies and Engagement, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities

**Kate Snyder**, Strategic Communications Consultant, Snyder Strategies

**Kim McMurray**, Deputy Political Director, Working America

**Andrea Mercado**, Executive Director, New Florida Majority

***The Plot Against America?...Real Challenges & Solutions to Election Interference***

Russian hacking and disinformation in the 2016 election was unprecedented, as is the politicization of a foreign adversary's attack on American democracy. The Trump administration and Congress' failure to respond have clouded vulnerabilities and challenged effective responses. This discussion will focus on what we know about foreign intrusion into our voting systems and disinformation campaigns to influence the 2016 election – and what we need to do to responsibly defend our democracy in the future.

**Speakers include:**

**David J. Becker**, Executive Director and Founder, Center for Election Innovation and Research  
**Nina Jankowicz**, Russian, Eurasian and Eastern European Affairs Specialist, Center for Election Innovation and Research  
**Liz Wester**, New Hampshire State Director, America Votes

**4:20 PM – 4:30 PM: Break**

**4:30 PM – 5:30 PM: Running and Winning in the Era of Trump**

In 2017 and 2018, across the country and in purple, blue and red districts, Americans of diverse and underrepresented race and gender backgrounds and life experiences have stepped up and put their names forward in unprecedented numbers to run for office. They ran and are running to defend our values, protect our most vulnerable, restore accountability and advance policies that move local communities, states and our country forward. This session will look at what's happening that is moving so many people to enter the fray at a pivotal moment.

In conversation led by **Carrie Pugh, Political Director, National Education Association**, we'll hear from **Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Chair U.S. Representative Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM)** for a brief discussion of the fight for control of the U.S. House. That fight is being fueled by tremendous recruitment of strong, diverse candidates across the country, and the conversation will be joined by an expert strategist leading the recruitment of strong progressive women for state and local office, **Geri Prado, Senior Director of State and Local Campaigns, EMILY's List**, and a leader who stepped up to protect vulnerable families and transform her community, **Councilmember Crystal Murillo of Aurora City Council Ward 1**.

**5:30 PM – 7:30 PM: America Votes, Partners and Allies Celebrate 15 Years**

We're thrilled to be joined by leaders of our longstanding partner organizations and by **U.S. Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)**, the senior senator and progressive champion from one of our strongest states, to celebrate 15 years of impactful collaborations, progressive leadership and the power of voting. Come join as we raise a glass to YOU – America Votes' partners, allies and supporters!

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## Wednesday, February 28

**8:30 AM – 1:00 PM: Registration Open**

**8:30 AM: Breakfast Served**

**9:00 AM – 10:00 AM: A View from the Frontlines on Capitol Hill**

Progressive champion **U.S. Representative Pramila Jayapal (D-WA)** will join the Summit to give a view from the frontlines on Capitol Hill. Rep. Jayapal has been a leading voice of strong opposition to the GOP and Trump administration on issues ranging from environmental protections to immigration. Throughout her career, Rep. Jayapal has been fighting for people as an advocate for a wide range of issues including income equality, tax reform, campaign finance reform and debt-free college. The first Indian-American woman in the House of Representatives, Rep. Jayapal has spent the last 20 years working internationally and domestically as a leading national advocate for women's, immigrant, civil and human rights. Rep. Jayapal will be introduced by **Ademola Oyefeso, Political Director of the United Food and Commercial Workers**, whose members have stood

alongside Rep. Jayapal, in the Fight for 15, paid sick leave efforts and other pro-working family policies in Seattle.

**10:00 AM – 10:45 AM: A Conversation with the Honorable Eric H. Holder, Jr., Chairman of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee and 82<sup>nd</sup> Attorney General of the United States**

Redistricting is a top priority for everyone working for voting rights, a fair and responsive democracy and to advance progressive policies. The 2010 election enabled an unprecedented level of Republican gerrymandering that has locked in extreme conservative majorities in Congress and legislatures throughout this decade. However, progressives have recently made significant gains in rolling back conservative gerrymanders in several key states through litigation, reform and electoral strategies. The 2018 midterm presents an enormous opportunity to elect the governors and other critical offices who will oversee post-2020 redistricting.

**Attorney General Eric H. Holder, Jr. is Chairman of the National Democratic Redistricting Committee (NDRC)**, leading the development of strategies to impact the next redistricting and end conservative gerrymandering at the ballot box, in the courts and through changes in the process. Gen. Holder's leadership of the NDRC builds upon his distinguished tenure as Attorney General. He prioritized strong protection of voting rights and the enforcement of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 at the Department of Justice. In this session, we will hear from Gen. Holder in conversation with **America Votes Communications Director Krishana Davis** about the rapidly-changing redistricting landscape followed by a question and answer session with the audience. The session will be introduced by **Heather Taylor-Miesle, Executive Director of Ohio Environmental Council** and a leader in the recent successful effort to put a congressional redistricting reform initiative before voters in Ohio in the upcoming May election.

**10:45 AM – 11:00 AM: Break**

**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM: Breakout Sessions: Getting in Shape for 2018**

These mini training sessions provide useful skills-building and prep around key organizational issues facing our community as we head into campaign season.

***Data Security Basics, or Shrinking the Target on Your Back***

Worried about securing your organization's emails and info? Don't understand what the threat is? Don't want to be the victim of a right-wing sting or hack? Join this session to get all the information you need to know about data security basics, contextualize the forecasted attack climate, tools to understand what the potential threat is to your organization and fundamental best practices that will reduce your threat.

**Speakers include:**

**Oscar Boleman**, National Data Manager, America Votes

**Shauna Daly**, President, Progressive Security Corps

**Mike Sager**, Chief Technology Officer, EMILY's List

***Taking Care of Your Badass Self***

This interactive session will provide you with the tools to boost performance, heighten creativity, improve morale and decrease burnout, from now through Election Day. The session will leave you feeling inspired and equipped with your own self-care plan. The feminist writer and civil rights activist Audre Lorde said it best: "Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

**Speakers include:**

**Jayson Sime**, Founder, Right to Shine

***How to be a Digital Strategist***

Whether you are planning a robust digital campaign across several states or focused on a smaller campaign in one district, this session will leave you ready to engage with vendors on the specifics of a media plan. The session will cover the fundamentals of digital and leave participants with an understanding of: the types of digital ads, the pros and cons of various types of targeting and how to use these in combination, as well as how to understand key metrics for their campaigns.

**Speakers include:**

**Joe Davis**, Executive Director, Alliance for a Better Minnesota

**Madeline Twomey**, Director of Training and Fellowships, Priorities USA

***Developing Staff for Leadership Positions***

In order to set up the future leaders of our movement for success, we need to proactively build up the management skills of our staff. In this session, you'll learn some tips and best practices for developing your staff, with a specific focus on preparing people – especially staff representing communities of color and staff from traditionally marginalized communities – to make a successful transition into management roles in the future.

**Speakers include:**

**Ashley Pinedo-Carlson**, Partner, The Management Action Center

***Things You'd Only Learn from 1000 Tests: Top 9 Campaign Best Practices***

You can always learn something from a test, but there are some things you can only learn by looking at hundreds of tests at the same time. By using tools such as meta-analysis and comparing effects across modes and election years, Analyst Institute will share import data about estimated GOTV effects, which new tactics are gold and which might be lead and even how to read our graphs. If you are a seasoned practitioner or if you are in-charge of writing your organization's budget and plan, this session is for you.

**Speakers include:**

**Daniel Gonzales**, Director of Strategy, Analyst Institute

**12:15 PM:**

**Lunch Served**

**12:30 PM – 1:00 PM:**

**Lunch Discussion: *Janus v. AFSCME ... What You Need to Know & How to Fight Back***

Corporate forces on the right are continually working to take away Americans' freedoms – by voter suppression, gerrymandering or diminishing the collective power of workers. Attacks on workers have resulted in *Janus v. AFSCME*, a key case being heard by the U.S. Supreme Court right now – coinciding with the America Votes State Summit. This case could have long-term implications for the strength of our democracy and diminish the power and voice of public workers to organize in a union. Join this compelling discussion of what's at stake in *Janus* for all of us, the corporate forces behind it and what you can do to fight back.

**Speakers include:**

**Heather Conroy**, Executive Vice President, SEIU

**Celinda Lake**, President, Lake Research Partners

**Jessica Walls-Lavelle**, Pennsylvania State Director, America Votes

**1:00 PM – 1:15 PM: Break**

**1:15 PM – 2:15 PM: Smarter Strategy Through Stronger Coordination in 2018**

America Votes' 2018 Coordination Console (AVCC) leverages our data assets and coordination model to provide partners with an enhanced tool for tracking, analyzing and making strategic and resource decisions based on work being done in the field in real time. This session will review longstanding challenges in direct voter contact and the practical solutions for individual organizations' programs and to strengthen our collective work through the AVCC and other new tools and enhancement of our longstanding coordination models.

**Speakers include:**

**Miguel Avitia**, New Mexico State Director, America Votes

**Wa'el Alzayat**, CEO, Emgage

**Emily Callen**, National Data and Targeting Director, America Votes

**Bubba Nunnery**, National Political Director, America Votes

**Melissa Williams**, Independent Expenditure Director, EMILY's List

**2:15 PM – 2:30 PM: Tribute to the Life & Legacy of a Progressive Leader: Paul Booth**

**2:45 PM – 3:45 PM: Breakout Sessions: Digging Deeper into 2018 Continued**

***Coordinated Digital Campaigns***

Progressive allies are working to extend America Votes' model of field and direct voter contact to online campaigns, and last year's elections in Virginia served as an early proving ground for maximizing the collective impact of allied partners' digital campaigns. This session will discuss the challenges and opportunities coordinating this fast-moving mode of engagement review examples that can serve as a model for in-state and national partners in 2018.

**Speakers include:**

**Danielle Butterfield**, Director of Advertising, Priorities USA

**Jenny Lawson**, National Campaign Director, Planned Parenthood Federation of America

**Leslie Martes**, State Electoral Campaigns Director, League of Conservation Voters

In formation

***Innovative Tactics & Methods: Exploring Relational Voting, Empathetic Persuasion and Field Listening***

This eye-opening presentation will explore the challenges and opportunities in employing new tactics and posit that our movement hasn't kept up with how Americans make decisions and look at effective campaign tools to layer into your program in the post-Trump political era. For example, the Relational Voter Program, which utilizes a voter's real-world relationships, had an effect size 10 times higher than the 2016 average Analyst Institute test. Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin has worked for several years with Dr. Phyllis Watts, one of the nation's top psychological

consultants, to developed the “Empathic Approach to Organizing” to leverage the process by which people change their hearts and minds by meeting voters where they are most persuadable. Listening to the field and making adjustments based on what the voters are saying on doors was another key tactic overlooked in 2016.

**Speakers include:**

**John Grabel**, Executive Director, For Wisconsin’s Future

**Cory Medina**, Deputy Political Director, Working America, AFL-CIO

**Nicole Safar**, Director of Government Relations at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin

**Brandon Thompson**, Field Director, For Our Future

***Democracy Reforms: Initiatives and Strategies in States***

Citizens in many states this year will have the opportunity to retake their democracy by restoring rights and leveling the playing field against corporate special interests. This discussion will focus on criminal justice, redistricting and democracy reforms in three states and other opportunities for progressives to retake power for people via ballot initiatives as well as legislative and administrative actions.

**Speakers include:**

**DaMareo Cooper**, Organizing Director, Ohio Organizing Collaborative

**Molly Fleming**, Director, Missouri Organizing and Voter Engagement Collaborative (MOVE) Action

**Patrick Schuh**, Michigan State Director, America Votes

***High Impact Races: Building Power at Every Level***

This session will highlight some of the 2018 races with the most potential to impact critical issues, power, and the everyday quality of life in battleground states, cities and small towns. We will take a look at mayoral, sheriff, district attorney and attorneys general races across a wide array of states, from North Carolina to New Mexico. Panelists will share challenges and opportunities when building strategies and executing tactics to engage at this level of the ballot.

**Speakers include:**

**Kwesi Chappin**, Senior Field Director, Color of Change

**Isabelle James**, Political Director, Giffords PAC

**Daniel McKelvey**, Deputy Executive Director, Advance North Carolina

**Karla Molinar-Arviso**, Communications Fellow, New Mexico Dream Team

**Todd Zimmer**, Co-director, Down Home North Carolina

In formation

**3:45 PM – 4:00 PM: Break**

**4:00 PM – 5:00 PM: Planning for Tuesday, November 6 and Preparing for Everything That Follows**

The final panel discussion will consider what to expect from the 2018 election landscape and what it means for our work leading up to Election Day, November 6, and anticipating the work beginning the next day. The discussion will begin with data indicating that 2018 could be a dramatically different and more favorable campaign environment than in 2016 and the 2010 and 2014 midterms, indicators of a “wave election” and what could prevent it and how a strong tailwind would change progressives’ strategy heading into November, looking specifically at the U.S. House map. The conversation will then turn to the implications of the 2018 landscape and midterm results on

progressives' organizing strategies in the near-term and longer-term accountability and power-building.

**Speakers include:**

**Ali Lapp**, President, House Majority PAC

**Kenia Morales**, Nevada State Director, America Votes

**Deepak Pateriya**, Chief of Staff, Center for Community Change Action

**Mike Podhorzer**, Political Director, AFL-CIO

**Josiette White**, National Field Director, America Votes

**5:00 PM – 5:30 PM: Closing Session: Honoring Voting Rights Champions**

Voting is the foundation of every democracy, and extending the fundamental right to vote to every American of every race and background is a centuries-old, enduring struggle. Confronting opponents of voting rights, emboldened by conservative power in states and reactionary leaders in the Trump administration and Congress, progressives, community leaders and democrats (small-d) of every stripe right now need strong leaders – in elected office and advocating independently – working tirelessly to defend voting rights and to uphold the fabric of American democracy.

America Votes is deeply honored to pay tribute at this year's State Summit to two truly outstanding voting rights leaders with our **Cecile Richards Progressive Leader Award**. We will be honoring **Anita Earls, most recently with Southern Coalition for Social Justice**, and **The Honorable Terry McAuliffe, 72<sup>nd</sup> Governor of Virginia**.

Our honorees represent leaders in the fight for voting rights in every sense. Anita Earls has dedicated her life to protecting and expanding the franchise of every American. From her service as Asst. Attorney General in the Civil Rights Division of the Department of Justice, overseeing the Voting section, to her forward-looking leadership of the SCSJ and leadership in litigating successful challenges to North Carolina's "Monster" voter suppression law and countless regressive redistricting plans, Ms. Earls has been on the vanguard of so many of the most critical fights for voting rights of the last three decades and will be an outstanding voice for justice on the North Carolina Supreme Court.

Gov. Terry McAuliffe quite simply did everything in his power to protect and expand the voting rights of Virginians over his four years in office. Faced with conservative opposition in the legislature at every turn, he worked tirelessly to modernize Virginia's voting systems by administratively enacting online voter registration and other modernization efforts. And on the restoration of voting rights to felons, Gov. McAuliffe set a remarkably high standard for leadership by individually signing orders restoring voting rights to over 173,000 Virginians disenfranchised under the state's regressive, Jim Crow-era law.

Please join America Votes for honoring Anita Earls and Gov. Terry McAuliffe for their steadfast commitment to protecting and expanding voting rights for every American.