

## America Votes State Summit 2019

February 20-21, 2019

Walter E. Washington Convention Center

801 Mt. Vernon Place NW

Washington, DC



AMERICA VOTES  
**STATE  
SUMMIT**

# State Summit 2019 Agenda

**\*\*ALL TIMES AND SESSIONS SUBJECT TO CHANGE\*\***

## Wednesday, February 20

**10:30 AM – 4:30 PM: Registration Open**

**11:30 AM: Lunch Served**

**12:00 PM – 12:15 PM: Welcome**

**12:15 PM – 12:40 PM: Perspectives on Power-Building and Progress-Making in the States**

The 2019 America Votes State Summit will begin with perspectives on progress- and power-building in the states. America Votes and leaders of state partner organizations will offer remarks on the hard work and gains achieved in 2018 as well as the path forward.

**Lynneia Atkinson**, President, American Federation of Teachers in Jefferson County, West Virginia and K-3 Special Education Teacher, T. A. Lowery Elementary

**Eli Cuna**, National Field Director, United We Dream

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

**Sara Schreiber**, Managing Director, America Votes

**12:40 PM – 1:40 PM: From the Women's March to #MeToo to Blue Wavemakers: Women-Led Movements**

From the day Trump entered the White House, women and women's movements have led the way toward not only electoral victories but also greater equity and justice across lines of gender, class and race. This discussion brings together outstanding women leaders and centers on the role of women as the drivers of change in elections, within movements and communities, and in the 2020 race for the White House.

**Nadia Belkin**, Deputy Field Director, America Votes

**Ilyse Hogue**, President, NARAL, Pro-Choice America

**Zerlina Maxwell**, Political Analyst, MSNBC and Director of Progressive Programming, SiriusXM

**Jess Morales Rocketto**, Executive Director, Care in Action and Political Director, National Domestic Workers Alliance

**Melissa Williams**, Vice President for Independent Expenditures, EMILY's List

**1:40 PM – 2:45 PM: 2018 Takeaways and Carry-Forwards: Insights on a Big Year and the Path Forward**

The 2018 midterm election was not only a resounding victory for progressives but also a watershed year for voter turnout and civic participation on many fronts. While focus has clearly shifted toward 2020, how should the remarkable 2018 cycle inform progressives' strategies moving forward? What do last year's outcomes say about the real state of power in this country, and what strategies and messages will not just help win the next election but also move society toward broader equity and progress?

**Henry Fernandez**, CEO, Fernandez Advisors and Principal, African American Research Collaborative  
**Anna Greenberg**, Managing Partner, GQRR  
**Anat Shenker-Osorio**, Principal, ASO Communications  
**Greg Speed**, President, America Votes

**2:45 PM – 3:00 PM:** Break

**3:00 PM – 4:15 PM:** **Digging Deeper: Post-2018 Highlights, Debriefs and Priorities**

While broad forces “nationalized” the 2018 midterm to an extent, America Votes partners did much to shape the midterm narrative and electorate on the ground in their states through effective advocacy and election programs and strategies. The “Digging Deeper” breakout sessions will focus on what worked, what’s replicable and/or what really needs to happen on the ground to continue building toward further victory and progress in 2020 and beyond.

**Accountability and Resistance: Campaigns to Set the Narrative and Shift the Playing Field**

Campaigns are often won before they even start due to strong organizing and advocacy that shape the debate and establish narratives. This session looks at successful strategies to define the terms of the debate and generate support or opposition for policies and issues through effective communications, early organizing and the by-product of defining the officeholder’s positions very early in the campaign cycle.

**Danielle Atkinson**, Founding Director, Mothering Justice  
**Lauren Bealore**, Political Director, America Votes Michigan  
**Shirin Bidel-Niyat**, Assistant Director, Political Action Department, AFSCME  
**Fiona Conroy**, Pennsylvania Donor Alliance  
**Sonia Santana**, Director of Campaign Strategy, Planned Parenthood

**Beyond Transactional Politics: Political Power-Building in Communities of Color**

Across the states in 2018, dynamic organizations and leaders took organizing in underrepresented communities to the next level. This session looks at the hard work underway to build powerful organizations rooted in their communities plus the organizing and base-building strategies that delivered historic levels of voter mobilization and so many victories in 2018, as well as their common challenges, opportunities and plans to move from election wins toward long-term empowerment. Hear directly from practitioners about what worked – and didn’t work – in their states.

**Marcus Bass**, Executive Director, Advance North Carolina  
**Dusti Gurule**, Executive Director, Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR) and COLOR Action Fund  
**Eric Jeng**, Deputy Director, One APIA Nevada  
**Branden Snyder**, Executive Director, Good Jobs Now

**Represented: How Women Led at All Levels to Win 2018**

Together, women voters, activists, staff and candidates fueled 2018’s Blue Wave. This session will feature women leaders discussing the strategy and intention that embedded women’s leadership at every level and how the work and aspiration are growing toward 2020.

**Gaby Goldstein**, Co-Founder and Political Director, Sister District  
**Lucinda Guinn**, Vice President, Campaigns, EMILY's List  
**Kenia Morales**, State Director, America Votes Nevada  
**Pete Talley**, Executive Director, Ohio Utility Coalition and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists  
**Emily Zamora**, Executive Director, Silver State Voices

### **Showing Up: Trends and Tactics in Youth Engagement**

Gen Z and Millennials may be the most ideologically liberal generations in history, with strongly progressive views on social justice as well as an active role for government. Yet like many younger generations, motivating them to vote and be civically engaged has been challenging – and reaching them through traditional media is even harder. This session will feature leaders in the fight to engage and mobilize youth to flex their generational muscle and lead transformational change.

**Hannah Bristol**, Mobilization Director, NextGen America  
**Mike Burns**, National Director, Fair Elections Center  
**Drew Galloway**, Executive Director, MOVE Texas Civic Fund and MOVE Texas Action Fund  
**Dakota Hall**, Executive Director, Leaders Igniting Transformation  
**Jalakoi Solomon**, Arizona State Director, NextGen America

### **Small Towns and Wide-Open Spaces: Competing Outside Our Comfort Zone**

As the saying goes, "Ninety percent of success is showing up." Yet Democrats and progressives have shown how passing over rural communities and small towns leads to a steady plunge in voter support in recent elections. This session will highlight the need to reengage communities beyond urban and suburban cores and strategies for rebuilding support in rural communities and small towns.

**YT Bell**, Deputy Director, Georgia Engaged  
**Christina Coloroso**, Director of Analytics, Catalist  
**Josh Geise**, State Director, America Votes Florida  
**Matt Dannenberg**, Program Director, Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters

**4:15 PM – 4:30 PM:** Break

### **4:30 PM – 5:30 PM: Making the Connection: Values-Based Investment Strategies**

As the progressive community works toward greater alignment among organizational partners, funders and state tables, a critical goal and outcome is increasing investment strategies to advance racial equity and ensure mutual accountability and other values across the movement. This discussion brings together a group of leaders who have served in various stakeholder roles in these processes – as grantees and grantors, table partners and table funders – to consider how progressives can work more collaboratively to advance racial equity.

**Julie Fernandes**, Associate Director for Institutional Accountability and Individual Liberty, Rockefeller Family Fund  
**Alex Gomez**, Co-Execute Director, Living United for Change in Arizona  
**Deepak Pateriya**, Acting Vice President and Chief of Staff, Community Change Action  
**Sara Schreiber**, Managing Director, America Votes  
**Bill Vandenberg**, Division Director of Special Initiatives and States, U.S. Programs, Open Society Foundations

**5:30 PM – 7:30 PM: Cecile Richards Progressive Leader Award Reception Honoring Stacey Abrams**  
From her unwavering, movement-wide leadership in the fight to protect democracy from voter suppression and her highly effective tenure as minority leader in the Georgia House, to her inspiring campaign for governor and forceful State of the Union response that transformed the hardest gig in politics into an inspiration for Americans of all backgrounds, Stacey Abrams has delivered a lifetime of leadership, and she's just getting started.

America Votes is deeply honored to present the **Honorable Stacey Abrams** with the 2019 Cecile Richards Progressive Leader Award.

**The Honorable Stacey Abrams**, Founder and Chair, Fair Fight Action and Former Minority Leader, Georgia House of Representatives  
**Senator Nikema Williams**, Georgia State Senate (SD-39)

**7:30 PM – 8:45 PM: Partner Diversity Coalition Participants: Happy Hour and Dinner**  
The America Votes Partner Diversity Coalition is hosting a reception and dinner for all State Summit attendees who self-identify as members of historically racially marginalized communities. The Partner Diversity Coalition is a professional space for members of historically racially marginalized communities to connect, collaborate, exchange best practices and shift the culture of working within the progressive space.

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## Thursday, February 21

**8:30 AM – 1:00 PM: Registration Opens and Breakfast Served**

**9:00 AM – 9:45 AM: Winners Take All: A Conversation with Anand Giridharadas**  
"It's a win-win" has become part of the vernacular. "Win-win" is also the guiding principle for "market world" philanthropists who seek to change the world while changing nothing about the underlying system that concentrates more and more wealth and power in the hands of a very small number of elites. Anand Giridharadas' provocative book, *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World*, has garnered much acclaim and attention by exposing the folly of elite philanthropists' attempts to change the world in ways that only truly collective action can achieve.

**Anand Giridharadas**, Author  
**Maria Peralta**, National Political Director, SEIU

**9:45 AM – 10:45 AM: Restoring and Reclaiming Our Democracy: Imperatives for Voting Rights, the 2020 Census and Redistricting**  
In recent years, progressives have fought to defend democracy on many fronts while simultaneously elevating proactive democracy and election reforms to the top of the policy agenda. Now, the stakes are even higher as progressives fight to ensure a complete count and fair 2020 Census, plus undo conservative gerrymanders in post-2020 redistricting, all while enacting powerful democracy and election reforms such as Automatic Voter Registration at the state level. This panel discussion will explore the confluence of these critical issues for democracy as the turn of the decade approaches.

**Ashley Allison**, Executive Vice President, Campaigns and Programs, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

**Alexis Anderson-Reed**, Executive Director, State Voices

**John Bisognano**, Director of Campaigns and State Engagement, National Democratic Redistricting Committee

**Jake Matilsky**, Center for Secure and Modern Elections

**10:45 AM – 10:50 AM: Breakout Sessions Introduction**

**10:50 AM – 11:00 AM:** Break

**11:00 AM – 12:15 PM: The Long Game: Strengthening Democracy and Building the Infrastructure**

These breakout sessions will dig deeper into democracy issues and strategies for strengthening democracy as well as skills-building and training to strengthen progressive organizations.

**Enacting and Implementing Automatic Voter Registration for a Robust Democracy**

Automatic voter registration (AVR) is a secure and accurate way to modernize voter registration, and be it through ballot initiatives or state legislatures, it's revolutionizing how Americans are registering to vote. This session will examine the national AVR landscape and take a look at what its implementation means for progressives' programs. Panelists will also dive into communications strategies around AVR and what a current legislative battle over AVR looks like, providing insights from the states on advancing this critical measure across the nation.

**Joe Gallant**, Program Director, America Votes New Mexico

**Katrina Gamble**, Strategic Advisor, Center for Secure and Modern Elections and Principal, Sojourn Strategies

**Annette Magnus**, Executive Director, Battle Born Progress

**Kelsey Paden**, Data Director, Our Oregon

**From "Count Every Vote" to Trump's "Rigged Elections": Messaging to Combat Voter Suppression and Restore Confidence**

How do progressives think about get-out-the-vote communications when voter suppression is rampant in many states and the integrity of the vote-count itself is being injected into the debate? As preparations begin for an election that Trump will almost certainly again call "rigged," this session will highlight important messaging research on voting and suppression as well as recent best practices from the field in calling out efforts to suppress voters while working tirelessly to GOTV.

**Alexis Acevedo**, Political and Field Director, America Votes Nevada

**Sean Lund**, Messaging Research Director, Movement Advancement Project

**Shauntay Nelson**, Democracy Director, Wisconsin Voices

**Emma Weinstein-Levey**, Media Associate, Rethink Media

**Porsha White**, National Political Director, Let America Vote

**Get Out the Count: Your Role in a Successful Census**

Every community has a huge stake in achieving a full and fair count in the next Census. With 2020 fast approaching, the Trump Administration's incompetence and malevolence threatens the integrity of the count. This session will feature community leaders and census experts discussing the work happening to get out the count next year.

**Viswa Challa**, Data Manager, America Votes Minnesota

**Marissa Liebling**, Director of Policy, State Voices

**Beth Lynk**, Director of Census Counts Campaign, The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

**Marci Mclean**, Montana Native Vote

**Leslie Potts**, Data and VAN Administrator, Win/Win Action

### **Stronger Workers = Stronger Democracy: Growing Unions Amid Unprecedented Attacks**

The right of workers to collectively bargain by organizing a union is a fundamental right in a democracy. Much like their efforts to suppress voters, conservatives have launched vicious attacks on labor unions and workers at every level over the past decade. Yet even amid the gravest attacks, like the Supreme Court's *Janus* decision, labor unions are fighting back and more than holding their own. This session explores what unions are doing to get organized and fight back.

**Jane Carter**, AFSCME

**Katrina Mendiola**, National Education Association

**Rodell Mollineau**, Accountability Project

**Eric Rosso**, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Spotlight

**Megan Sweeney**, Systems Director, SEIU

### **Building Diverse and Equitable Teams and Organization**

Creating equitable staff teams takes much more than good intention; it requires a plan with measurable goals. As progressives look toward 2019 and 2020 and building large-scale teams to execute winning strategies, this session will review best practices in hiring and leave you with tangible steps your organization can take as hiring ramps up.

**Cymone Bolding**, Co-Executive Director and Founder, Our Voice, Our Vote Arizona

**Maria Peña**, Partner, The Management Center

### **Don't Get Wikileaks! Only *You* Can Protect Your Organization**

A progressive organization's success is typically thought of as relying on good organizing, healthy financials and dedicated staff; however, many organizations are vulnerable to reputation-damaging incidents that could be avoided with small changes in daily tasks. This session will introduce a set of actionable tools and behaviors for participants to incorporate in their workplace and future plans.

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

**Tim Lumpkins**, Data and Targeting Manager, Missouri Organizing and Voter Engagement Action

**12:15 PM – 12:45 PM: Lunch Served**

**12:45 PM – 1:30 PM: A Conversation with Governor Kate Brown of Oregon**

Governor Kate Brown is a strong and well-credentialed leader on democracy reform and election modernization issues. Not only did she sign Oregon's first-in-the-nation Automatic Voter Registration law as governor, she drafted the law as secretary of state. America Votes thrilled to hear from Governor Brown on the way forward on voting and many more issues that she is leading for progressives.

**Sarah Audelo**, Alliance for Youth Action

**Gov. Kate Brown**, State of Oregon

**1:30 PM – 1:45 PM: Break**

**1:45 PM: – 2:00 PM: Enhancing Impact through Coordination: A Conversation with Civic Action Fund**

**Greg Speed**, President, America Votes  
**Ashley Spillane**, Director, Civic Action Fund, and President, Impactual

**2:00 PM – 3:15 PM: Looking Beyond the Primaries: 2020 Landscapes and Strategies**

2020 is the next in the long series of “most important elections in our lifetimes.” Indeed, the stakes could not be higher – from winning the White House and ending the Trump Era in American politics to the fight for full control of Congress to the final state elections before the next redistricting. Everything is on the line, and enormous change is possible if progressives are successful. This session will assess the electoral landscapes at every level and highlight strategies for success (and many known unknowns) as this movement forges the path to 2020.

**Cornell Belcher**, President, Brilliant Corners  
**Allison Jaslow**, Executive Director, DCCC  
**Elizabeth Kazal**, State Director, America Votes North Carolina  
**Jenny Lawson**, National Campaigns Director, Planned Parenthood Action Fund  
**JB Poersch**, President, Senate Majority PAC

**3:15 PM – 3:30 PM: Break**

**3:30 PM – 4:35 PM: Building the Next Wave: 2019 Priorities for 2020 Victories**

The final round of breakout sessions will focus on tactics and strategies to raise the game of campaigns and programs in 2020 and beyond.

**Rethinking Research: Innovative Strategies and Structures**

Is polling broken? Was it fixed in 2018? Whatever the answers, progressives can certainly be smarter and more efficient about the research conducted and the ways in which it is distributed. This session is focused on how “research hubs” – in practice or in concept – can help make advocacy and electoral campaigns smarter.

**Amy Chapman**, Two Peninsulas Research Group  
**Sam Gehler**, Field and Political Director, America Votes Pennsylvania  
**Charlie Kelly**, Executive Director, House Majority PAC  
**Rebecca Pearcey**, Democratic Legislative Campaign Committee

**Everything is Local: Winning from the Local Level Up**

Local elections are where the policies closest to people’s daily lives are determined. County-level and municipal offices are critical to criminal justice reform and other social justice priorities as well as administering elections in most states. These races are also often held in off-years, providing great mid-cycle opportunities for program innovation and capacity-building. This session focuses on “going local” to build power by advancing all of these strategic imperatives.

**Lizeth Chacon**, Founding Executive Director, Colorado People’s Action and Colorado People’s Alliance  
**Zach Jonas**, Data Manager, America Votes New Hampshire  
**John Jones**, Assistant Director of Government Relations, Pennsylvania State Education Association  
**Angela Lang**, Executive Director, Black Leaders Organizing for Communities  
**Shira Miller**, Director of Community Partnerships and Senior Advisor for Political Strategy, Analyst Institute

**Relational Organizing: Leveraging Relationships to Build Power**

While it's increasingly challenging to reach voters through traditional communications, leveraging personal networks to organize and deliver messages has never been easier or more effective. This session updates and builds upon a very well-received breakout session at the 2018 State Summit to highlight effective relational organizing techniques in the states.

**Nick Chedli Carter**, 2020 Vision Ventures  
**John Gabel**, AFSCME Wisconsin  
**Mike Griffin**, Community Change Action  
**Kristee Paschall**, National Director, Win Justice

**Reclaiming the South: Strategies to Build Power**

In 2018, gains were made on multiple levels of the ballot across the south. Many of these gains resulted in the election of a diverse slate of candidates. Record levels of infrastructure were established on the ground, and unprecedented maps to electoral victory were created and utilized by a new generation of changemakers. This panel will explore the emerging importance of southern states within the larger progressive movement and key strategies for successful engagement at the state and national levels.

**Brianna Brown**, Deputy Director, Texas Organizing Project  
**Quentin Mays**, Deputy Political Director, America Votes  
**Tristan Wilkerson**, Managing Principal, Think Rubix

**Building the Pipeline: National and State Models for Candidate Recruitment**

Developing and maintaining ongoing, effective channels for candidate recruitment has been a longstanding challenge and infrastructure gap in the progressive community. Yet with 2020 fast-approaching, it is a need that must be met if progressives are to be successful at all levels of the ballot. The entire progressive movement knows that there is a better way to recruit winnable candidates who will champion progressive causes, and this session will take a look at what those are at both the state and national levels.

**Sayu Bhojwani**, Founder and President, New American Leaders  
**Denise Feriozzi**, Principal, Civitas Public Affairs  
**Irene Godínez**, Director of Leadership Development, LEAD NC  
**Geri Prado**, Senior Director, State and Local Campaigns, EMILY's List

**Emerging State Models for Digital Coordination: What We Can Learn for 2020**

As the methods and means of digital communication continue to expand each cycle, it is becoming increasingly important to not only meet voters where they are in the digital space but also consider how the progressive community can best collaborate to be as efficient and effective in digital programs as possible. In this session, practitioners in the states will share what they have learned and what progressives need to know about digital coordination moving into 2020.



**Emma Burnett**, Digital Director, Maine Votes

**Krishana Davis**, Precision Strategies

**Marissa Luna**, Communications Director, Alliance for a Better Minnesota

**Ian Silverii**, Executive Director, Progress Now Colorado

**Daniel Van Hoogstraten**, Communications Director, For Our Future Ohio

**4:35 PM – 4:45 PM:** Break

**4:45 PM – 5:30 PM:** **Closing Session**

**5:30 PM - 7:30 PM:** **Closing Happy Hour Co-Sponsored by NGP VAN + EveryAction**