



2023 SISTER DISTRICT IMPACT REPORT





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sisterdistrict.com

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear friends,

As we unveil the 2023 Impact Report, I am filled with tremendous gratitude for what we have achieved together in the past year. This report not only highlights our accomplishments, but also reflects the unwavering dedication of the Sister District community to our mission of building durable power in state legislatures.

This year, our volunteer firepower was on full display. Not only were we a **top ten donor to all ten of our candidates** as of Election Day, but we were also some of their biggest early backers, driving an average of **8% of our candidates' spring and summer fundraising**. And we hit the phones starting in May, making an average of **43% of our campaigns' calls to voters**. This outsized grassroots impact enabled us to build trust with our candidates and their staff so that we could ensure the use of **best practices informed by evidence and experience, tailored to the local needs of each district**.

Together, **we flipped the Virginia House and defended the Senate**, which has real consequences for the people of the Commonwealth. Virginia is the last state in the South without a post-Roe abortion ban. Now it will continue to be a safe haven for people seeking an abortion, and Democratic majorities will hold the line against Republicans' MAGA agenda.

But we know the work doesn't stop with Election Day. I invite you to read through the rest of this report for more details about our support for candidates in Virginia, as well as our programs that are laying the groundwork in key battlegrounds like Arizona and Wisconsin, with blockbuster elections just around the corner this November.

The path ahead is filled with opportunities to make an even greater impact. Your unwavering support and commitment are the bedrock of our continued success where it matters most—in the states.

With Gratitude,

Lala Wu
Executive Director and Co-Founder



679,197

DOLLARS RAISED FOR CANDIDATES & MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS ++

377,435

VOTERS REACHED OUT TO

8%

AVERAGE RAISED OF EACH CANDIDATES' EARLY MONEY

8

STATE BRIDGES PARTNERS +

8 OF 10

CANDIDATES WON

550+

VOLUNTEER TEAM EVENTS

43%

AVERAGE OF OUR CANDIDATES' EARLY CALLS TO VOTERS MADE BY US

49

FELLOWSHIPS FOR RISING STAR ORGANIZERS

40%

OF OUR CALLS MADE BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1ST

75%

OF CANDIDATE MONEY RAISED BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1ST



SISTER DISTRICT IS THE MOST EFFECTIVE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN THE COUNTRY.

DELEGATE-ELECT PHIL HERNANDEZ

OUR MISSION:

WE BUILD ENDURING PROGRESSIVE POWER IN STATE LEGISLATURES. WE DO THIS BY SUPPORTING CANDIDATES, MOBILIZING VOLUNTEERS, EMPOWERING LAWMAKERS, AND EDUCATING VOTERS.







At Sister District, we are obsessed with state legislatures because of the outsized impact they have on every issue we care about, from abortion to climate to democracy itself. **Our north star is building power in key states every year this decade to put us in the strongest position possible for redistricting in 2031.** To do this, we win urgent elections each cycle and build infrastructure for the long term. Below is an overview of our programs.

WIN URGENT ELECTIONS (SDP)

Volunteer Firepower: Dollars, dials, and more to support majority-making candidates

Campaign Services: Technical assistance and evidence-based support to power excellent campaigns

Fellows Program: Preparing students and career-switchers for jobs in organizing

Future Winners: Training and community for candidates who lost but should run again

BUILD LONG-TERM INFRASTRUCTURE (SDAN)

Purple District Network: Strategizing with frontline lawmakers to build power, even if not in the majority

State Power Table: Convening national organizations supporting state lawmakers with SiX and the Pipeline Fund ■

State Bridges: Fundraising and awareness for state partners doing year-round organizing in battleground states

Narrative Change: Elevating the power and promise of states through media & think tanks ■

Research: Award-winning research, including on down-ballot roll-off—when voters don't vote all the way down the ballot ■

■ Indicates non-partisan work

Our work this year spanned all of our target states, but we focus on three in this report: **Virginia, Arizona, and Wisconsin.** We also highlight accomplishments from our alumni. **A full compendium of facts and figures can be found in the Program Stats section.**



SISTER DISTRICT'S WORK TO BUILD POWER IN STATE LEGISLATURES IS CRUCIAL TO BUILDING A HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY. STATE LEGISLATURES ARE AT THE FRONT LINES OF THE VOTING RIGHTS FIGHT, AND **WE MUST INVEST IN WORK AT THE STATE LEVEL TO PROTECT DEMOCRACY UP AND DOWN THE BALLOT.** SCHUSTERMAN FAMILY PHILANTHROPIES IS PROUD TO PARTNER WITH SISTER DISTRICT ON THEIR WORK TO EDUCATE, EMPOWER, AND ADVANCE STATE LEGISLATORS WHILE BUILDING POLITICAL POWER FOR WOMEN.

—Stacy Schusterman, Chair, Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Philanthropies



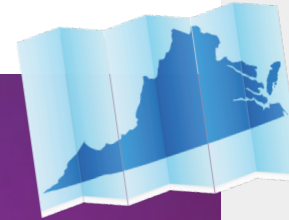
WINNING **VIRGINIA**



HOW WE GOT HERE

As the place where we first cut our teeth in 2017, the Commonwealth is near and dear to our hearts—and it has been a rollercoaster ride ever since. Six years ago, Democrats came within one vote of flipping the Virginia House. In 2019, we returned to flip both chambers and secure a Democratic trifecta, ushering in two years of historic legislation, including ratifying the ERA, banning the death penalty, legalizing recreational cannabis, and passing gun safety reforms.

Then in 2021, Dems lost the Governorship and the House—by just **733 votes**.



WHAT HAPPENED THIS YEAR

2023 was our fourth election year in Virginia, and we propelled 8 of our 10 candidates to victory, flipping the Virginia House and defending the Senate. Our careful targeting paid off, and we endorsed 2 of 3 tipping point races in the House and 3 of 3 in the Senate.

WHY IT MATTERS

Virginia is the last state in the South without an extremist abortion ban since *Roe v. Wade* was overturned in 2022. These wins mean that the Commonwealth will remain a safe haven for those seeking reproductive care. And Democrats are now well positioned to win back the Governor's Mansion and retake a trifecta in 2025.



SISTER DISTRICT IS A WELL-OPERATED ORGANIZATION WITH A PASSIONATE TEAM. EACH TEAM MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER DEMONSTRATED GENUINE COMMITMENT TO OUR RACE. **ON THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL, THAT TYPE OF SUPPORT IS INVALUABLE.**

SENATOR-ELECT
LASHRECSE AIRD





OUR IMPACT

Sister District played a key role in these victories. Because our grassroots donors give directly to candidates, we don't show up on campaign finance reports. But collectively, **Sister District was one of the top ten donors to every single one of our candidates as of Election Day—in many cases, the top five.** On average, Sister District made 43% of our candidates' phone calls to voters, freeing up candidates and local staff for their highest-value conversations on the doors. We paired this outsized grassroots firepower with professional support, informed by best practices and tailored for the unique circumstances of each race.

IN VIRGINIA, WE'VE REACHED OUT TO **1,760,293** VOTERS AND **RAISED \$2,263,469** FOR CANDIDATES AND POWER-BUILDING ORGANIZATION NEW VIRGINIA MAJORITY SINCE 2017!



Michael Feggans for Delegate
@MikeFeggans

Our campaign is in the position to flip this seat because of the work of our staff, volunteers, and support orgs.

One of the most important is @Sister_District & their early support has meant the world.

Thanks @Lyzzs, @_lala_wu_, Shawn, and all the SD teams who support us.



Sister District- Sacramento and 3 others

3:00 PM · Nov 5, 2023 · 2,887 Views



Sister District was a vital partner to our success holding the Democratic majority in the Virginia Senate. Their **early support of key legislative targets allowed us to ensure successful pivots to general elections** from their endorsed candidates that had succeeded in their primary bids. We are grateful for the support of all of your volunteers nationwide.

-Matt Calderon
Campaigns Director,
Virginia Senate Democratic Caucus





OUR IMPACT MAKES MAJORITIES

550K+

Raised \$553,463
in small dollar
donations for
candidates

10

Top ten donor to
each of our 10
candidates as of
Election Day

377K+

Reached out
to 377,435
voters by phone,
postcards, texts,
and doors

8%

Average of 8% of
our candidates'
early money

67%

Average of 67%
of our candidates'
phone calls before
September 1st.

43%

Average of
43% of our
candidates' total
calls to voters

554

Threw 554
team events for
candidates

40+

Completed more
than 40 special
projects through
our Campaign
Services program

* INDICATE TIPPING POINT SEATS (CANDIDATES IN THE THREE CLOSEST RACES IN EACH CHAMBER)

BEYOND ELECTIONS

BUILDING POWER THROUGH LOCAL PARTNERS (SDAN)

SDAN's State Bridges program lays the groundwork for electoral victories in key states by elevating the profile of and fundraising for local power-building organizations. Since launching this program in 2021, we have raised over half a million dollars for our partner organizations, including more than \$50,000 for New Virginia Majority. Many of our volunteers also go on to become loyal donors, growing our partners' networks of supporters nationwide. *For more data on our State Bridges program, see the Program Stats section.*

SUPPORTING FRONTLINE LEGISLATORS (SDAN)

Winning an election is just the beginning. SDAN's Purple District Network (PDN) is the only state legislator network exclusively focused on providing support to state legislators in swing districts. Frontline legislators face challenges that are distinct from their colleagues. Our new Virginia members are joining a flourishing community for peer-to-peer learning with lawmakers from other states to exchange ideas and tools so they can best serve their communities.

Virginia members pictured left to right: top row Briana Sewell HD-25 ('21), Michelle Maldonado HD-20; bottom row: Joshua Cole HD-65 ('19, '21, '23), Lashrecse Aird SD-13 ('21, '23), Ghazala Hashmi SD-15 ('19). Years indicate Sister District endorsement.

Also this year, Purple District Network launched a **Black Women's Caucus** to create dedicated space for this increasingly powerful group of legislators. The caucus has three co-chairs, one of which is Virginia Delegate Briana Sewell. *For more about PDN, see the Program Stats section.*

“

THE PARTNERSHIP HAS GIVEN US MORE OPPORTUNITIES TO TALK ABOUT OUR WORK AND INCREASE OUR GRASSROOTS INDIVIDUAL DONOR BASE, SOMETHING WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TO DO FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS.

– Tram Nguyen, Co-Executive Director of New Virginia Majority





TELLING STORIES TO INSPIRE ACTION

State legislatures are growing ever more powerful, but many voters are still overly-focused on the federal level. In fact, voters on the left tend to drop off the ballot at a higher rate than voters on the right.

That's why this year, SDAN launched an ambitious new program to deploy resonant, emotionally compelling stories to elevate the power and promise of states.

We produce, distribute, and amplify great content and thought leadership to educate and inspire voters, activists, and the next generation of political leaders.

"THE PROBLEM IS THAT FOR FAR TOO LONG, OUR LEGISLATIVE BODIES HAVE FAILED TO REFLECT THE DIVERSE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE. UNTIL RECENTLY, MOST POLICYMAKERS WERE WEALTHY WHITE MEN AND THE LAWS THEY PASSED REFLECTED THEIR LIVED EXPERIENCES, NOT OURS."

- Virginia Delegate Irene Shin in *Teen Vogue*

In its first year, a cornerstone of our narrative change work was a non-partisan partnership with *Teen Vogue* for the "Historic Firsts in our State Houses" series, which uplifts inspiring state legislators with a focus on women, people of color, young folks, LGBTQIA+ folks, and folks from non-traditional backgrounds.

Sister District has helped to publish 9 pieces in *Teen Vogue*, which has a digital footprint of 12 million. The series featured an op-ed by Virginia Delegate Irene Shin, the first Korean-American woman elected to the House of Delegates.



teenVOGUE

Irene Shin, Virginia Delegate, Is Part of a Wave of Diverse Young Women Changing State History

In this op-ed, a Virginia state lawmaker talks about the real importance of having representatives who look like their constituents.

BY **IRENE SHIN**

APRIL 14, 2023

ENGAGING NEW AUDIENCES ONLINE

Sister District Reach

- > Partnered with digital mega-brands reaching over 15.3 million followers combined.
- > Sister District's organic digital presence reached an average of over 49k monthly, with a focus on Virginia in 2023.

Viral Campaign with Delegate Danica Roem



- > Amplified Delegate Roem's speech against anti-trans bills in the Virginia legislature.
- > Edited and shared a video of the speech, resulting in over half a million views across social media.
- > Collaborated with Instagram brand @feminist and activist Olivia Juliana to boost video reach organically.

Partnership with Jonathan Van Ness



- > Highlighted the importance of downballot voting in Virginia with *Queer Eye* star Jonathan Van Ness.
- > Featured a podcast interview on *Curious Now* with Sister District co-founders Lala Wu and Lyzz Schwegler.
- > Included story features and posts on *Curious Now* social channels.

Collaboration with @Impact

- > Focused on Virginia being the last Southern state without significant abortion restrictions.
- > Utilized story sets and posts on @impact's broadcast channel.
- > Achieved 80,340 impressions, 8,360 actions, and nearly 500 new volunteer sign-ups.

A photograph of a desert landscape at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, pink, and blue. In the foreground, there are several green cholla cacti with small white flowers. In the middle ground, there are several tall saguaro cacti. The ground is sandy and covered with small desert shrubs.

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK **IN ARIZONA**



HOW WE GOT HERE

Traditionally a Republican stronghold, changing demographics and shifting political dynamics have made Arizona a swing state. Arizona voted for Joe Biden in 2020, which was the first time the state had gone for a Democratic presidential candidate in more than two decades. In 2022, Democrats won a critical U.S. Senate election with Mark Kelly (D) by 5 points. The state's presidential primaries are held in March, which could give an early indicator of 2024 voter sentiment within the state.

 IN ARIZONA, WE'VE REACHED OUT
TO **292,953** VOTERS AND
RAISED \$850,258 FOR
CANDIDATES AND POWER-BUILDING
ORGANIZATIONS SINCE 2018!



"When Sister District Project began in 2016, Arizona was deep red. I joined SDP in 2017 because the founders opened my eyes to the outsized role state legislative races played in all our lives, no matter where we live. Back then, Republicans held every statewide executive office, both Senate seats, and huge majorities in the state legislature. In 2020, SDP's support for state legislators delivered the 10,457 votes Biden needed to clinch AZ. Today, every statewide executive office is Democratic, neither Senate seat is Republican, and we're only two seats from Dem majorities in both chambers. As we head into what is (now) the most important election of our lives, **2024 is the year we can finally tip the AZ state legislature from red to blue.** And there's no other grassroots group of volunteers—many now friends—I'd rather be fighting for our freedoms with, than Sister District Project!"

—Natalie Burdick, Sister District
San Francisco District Captain



MULTI-CYCLE INVESTMENTS

Sister District has invested in Arizona since 2018. We've endorsed 14 candidates over three cycles, resulting in 8 wins that held the line against Republican efforts to expand their majorities. Because of this work, we will have an opportunity to flip both chambers with **just two seats** in both the House and the Senate in 2024.



BUILDING POWER THROUGH LOCAL PARTNERS (SDAN)

As in Virginia, we supported community-based partner organizations doing year-round work in Arizona through SDAN's State Bridges program. In 2023, we supported Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA) for the third time and Rural Arizona Action (RAZA) for the second time, bringing our total raised for them to nearly \$90,000. *For more information about all eight of our 2023 State Bridges partners, please see the Program Stats section.*

“

We are so proud to have worked with Sister District this past year. You all were a huge part of us winning in the state, and we want to thank you for all the work that you do. Your constant and unwavering commitment to us is such an asset.



– Alejandra Gomez,
Executive Director of LUCHA

“

The best thing about working with Sister District is the tangible reminder that we are all part of something bigger. That what we do or don't do in Arizona has a ripple effect that reverberates across the country. Our fates are tied; it benefits us ALL to fight like hell, for ALL.



– Natali Fierros Bock,
Co-Executive Director of RAZA



SUPPORTING FRONTLINE LEGISLATORS (SDAN)

The SDAN Purple District Network is the only state legislator network exclusively focused on providing support to state legislators in frontline districts. For more about PDN, see the Program Stats section.

Arizona members pictured left to right: top row Judy Schwiebert: LD-2 ('20), Seth Blattman: LD-9; bottom row: Christine Marsh: SD-4, Lorena Austin: LD-9 ('22). Years indicate Sister District endorsement.



teenVOGUE

Politics

**Historic Firsts: Arizona State Rep.
Lorena Austin on LGBTQ+
Representation, Dress Codes, More**

STATE LAWMAKERS IN THE LIMELIGHT (SDAN)

The first piece in the **Teen Vogue “historic firsts” series** featured our 2022 endorsed candidate **Arizona State Representative Lorena Austin**. Lorena is the first Chicanx gender-nonconforming state legislator in the country. Amplifying voices like Lorena's help us change the narrative about what is possible at the state level.

“If you had told someone that a brown queer person was going to win a state race in Mesa, I don't think a lot of people would have believed you[...] I really wanted to redefine what a politician looks like, because I think it should be someone from your community that can relate and knows what's going on.”

– Arizona Representative Lorena Austin

A nighttime photograph of a city waterfront, likely Milwaukee, featuring several multi-story buildings with illuminated windows and a river with docked boats. The text "BUILDING MOMENTUM IN WISCONSIN" is overlaid in a large, yellow, sans-serif font. The word "IN" is significantly larger and bolder than the other words, which are in a regular weight. The background shows a mix of historic and modern architecture, with warm lights reflecting on the water.

BUILDING MOMENTUM **IN** WISCONSIN



HOW WE GOT HERE

Wisconsin is infamous for having one of the **most egregious partisan gerrymanders ever**, with Republicans holding a supermajority in the Senate and a near-supermajority in the Assembly, even though the state voted for Biden in 2020 and Democrats won every statewide race in 2018.



**IN WISCONSIN, WE'VE REACHED OUT
TO 96,376 VOTERS AND
RAISED \$353,463 FOR
CANDIDATES AND POWER-BUILDING
ORGANIZATIONS SINCE 2020!**



**THERE IS NEVER ENOUGH TIME,
MONEY OR VOLUNTEERS FOR ANY
POLITICAL CAMPAIGN, BUT DOWN
BALLOT ELECTIONS HAVE VERY
LITTLE TO WORK WITH IN TERMS
OF CAMPAIGN RESOURCES.**

THE WORK WE DID MATTERED.

— SHEILA M., GREATER CHICAGO

REDISTRICTING TURMOIL & PROMISING NEW MAPS

One of the most dramatic elections of 2023 was for the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which was held in April. Judge Janet Protasiewicz's victory flipped the court's majority from 4-3 conservative to liberal. Then, at the end of 2023, the state Supreme Court ruled 4-3 that the current maps violated the state constitution and would need to be redrawn, which would put all 132 state seats up for re-election. Republicans have pledged to take the fight all the way to the conservative U.S. Supreme Court, but as of this writing **Democrats have the potential for a groundbreaking year in 2024.**

MULTI-CYCLE INVESTMENTS

Sister District has been working in Wisconsin since 2020. We've endorsed 6 candidates over two cycles, resulting in 5 wins that have prevented Republicans from gaining supermajorities that could override the Democratic Governor's veto. Even with electoral maps still uncertain, 2024 is our fourth year working in the state and we are poised to hit the ground running.

BUILDING POWER THROUGH LOCAL PARTNERS (SDAN)

2023 was our third year supporting power-building organizations in Wisconsin through SDAN's State Bridges program. We supported Citizen Action of Wisconsin in 2021, 2022, and 2023; and WISDOM in 2022 and 2023, raising more than \$70,000 for the two organizations.

“

WITHOUT BEING A STATE BRIDGES PARTNER WE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE NEARLY HALF THE GREAT THINGS WE ACHIEVED OVER THE PAST FEW YEARS. THANK YOU SISTER DISTRICT!

- Priscilla Bort, Movement Politics
Director of Citizen Action

SISTER DISTRICT IS WILLING TO BE CONCERNED WITH THE 'SMALL PICTURE.' WHILE OTHERS HAVE THEIR SIGHTS SET ON THE BIGGEST, SPLASHIEST RACES AND CAMPAIGNS, SISTER DISTRICT HELPS GRASSROOTS PEOPLE TO HAVE AN IMPACT ON THEIR LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL RACES.

- David Liners, Executive Director of WISDOM

We leveraged our digital channels to draw attention to and raise money for these partners working tirelessly to support Judge Protasiewicz's bid for the Wisconsin Supreme Court. Our overall digital fundraising in the weeks prior to this election jumped 26%—a clear indication of grassroots interest in ending gerrymandering and protecting abortion rights.

PREPARING FOR NEW MAPS WITH FUTURE WINNERS

Our bi-annual Future Winners program, established by Sister District Project and run in partnership with EMILY's List and the DLCC for 2023, works to shore up the pipeline of progressive state legislative candidates by continuing to invest in developing exceptional candidates who came up a bit short in their last run.

“

THE INSIGHTS FROM OTHER CANDIDATES WERE VERY HELPFUL. I ALSO FELT THEIR PASSION. EVERYONE WAS SO KIND AND CONSIDERATE. COLLECTIVELY WE CAN CHANGE THE WORLD!

- LuAnn Bird, 2022 WI Assembly candidate, Future Winners 2023 participant

In anticipation of the incredible opportunities that will now be afforded to Democrats with new, competitive maps, **former candidates from Wisconsin made up our largest Future Winners cohort from any single state.** Of our 28 participants in 2023, six were from Wisconsin: LuAnn Bird, Lynne Parrott, Leah Spicer, Laura Gapske, Jessica Katzenmeyer, and Nathan M. Jurowski.

Our sessions covered topics from budgeting and fundraising to field strategy and campaign communications. We also held office hours, and many candidates took advantage of these to do a deep-dive into their past campaigns and future plans. For more on Future Winners, see the Program Stats section.





LEGISLATIVE VICTORIES

Virginia, Arizona, and Wisconsin are just a few of our target states. Next year, we will also return to presidential and democracy battlegrounds like Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. In 2023, **Sister District alumni from 2017-2022 championed policies that reverberated nationwide.** From Washington state to North Carolina, these legislators are gaining and wielding power to advance legislation that is reshaping America, one bill at a time. As we look ahead, we also look back at some additional highlights from our alum across the country.

NEVADA

Nevada's Republican Governor has veto power, but the legislature was still able to pass meaningful legislation with both chambers held by Democratic majorities, which Sister District helped to defend in 2022.

PROTECTING THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

Expanding voting access on tribal lands and in jails, protections for election workers from intimidation and interference, and resources to help local administrators run elections more smoothly.

INVESTING IN EDUCATION.

Passed the state's largest K-12 budget ever—pledging to spend more than \$2.7 billion over the next two years.

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE PROTECTIONS.

Passed laws protecting out-of-state abortion patients, and requiring insurance providers to cover treatment for gender dysphoria.

MICHIGAN

With a new Democratic trifecta, 2023 was an unprecedented year for ambitious, progressive legislation passed in Michigan. Sister District has endorsed 9 candidates over 3 cycles, and supported 2 power-building organizations through SDAN's State Bridges program. We were thrilled to see the hard work pay off with such trailblazing initiatives as:

BOLD CLIMATE ACTION.

Passed important climate legislation with the Clean Energy Future Package and Clean Energy and Jobs Act. The bills included key recommendations from Governor Gretchen Whitmer's MI Healthy Climate Plan, which charts a path towards 100% carbon neutrality by 2050. Michigan is now one of the top 5 states for clean energy commitments.

REPEALING RIGHT-TO-WORK.

Became the first state ever to repeal its right-to-work law, which had hamstrung unions in the state since 2012. The initiative was led by Sister District alum Darrin Camilleri, whose parents met as auto workers in Detroit.

PASSED GUN SAFETY REFORM.

A package of 11 bills added life-saving measures like background checks, safe storage laws, raising purchasing age, and red flag laws.

CODIFYING REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS.

Passed the Reproductive Health Act (RHA) after voters approved Proposal 3, which preserves reproductive freedom (including abortion) in the state constitution. The RHA also ends laws designed to close abortion providers, bans against medically-necessary late term abortion, and workplace discrimination against people who have sought an abortion.

ENSHRINING LGBTQIA+ RIGHTS.

Codified LGBTQIA+ protections into the state's civil rights law, permanently outlawing discrimination on the basis of sex or gender identity in employment, housing, public accommodations and education.

HEALTHCARE EXPANSION.

Part of the Affordable Care Act was written into Michigan law, including coverage for essential care, banning coverage caps, and allowing young people to stay on their parents' healthcare until the age of 26.



The Michigan House of Representatives gathered for an opening day ceremony last week at the State Capitol in Lansing. Emily Elconin for The New York Times

Statehouse Democrats Embrace an Unfamiliar Reality: Full Power

After taking control of four state governments in the midterms, including in politically mixed Michigan, Democrats have a long-sought chance to govern.

ALUMNI ACCOMPLISHMENTS

MICHIGAN

(new Dem trifecta in 2022)

Senator Darrin Camilleri ('22) led a historic repeal of the state's right-to-work law, fortifying worker rights and unionization.

Senator Winnie Brinks ('18) made history as the first-ever female Majority Leader of the Michigan Senate.

Senator Mallory McMorrow ('18) was selected as Senate Majority Whip.

Representative Laurie Pohutsky ('18) was appointed Speaker pro tempore of the House of Representatives.

NEVADA

(defended Dem majorities in 2022)

Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno ('22) was selected as the Speaker pro tempore of the Nevada Assembly and elected as the first Black woman chair of the Nevada Democratic Party.

Assemblywoman Brittany Miller ('22) amplified doula services in rural areas and enabled detained individuals to register and vote.

COLORADO

(new Dem trifecta in 2018)

Senator Faith Winter ('18) spearheaded a groundbreaking initiative to expand the state's anti-workplace harassment laws, improving the lives of workers across the state.

WASHINGTON

(new Dem trifecta in 2018)

Senator Emily Randall ('18) blazed a trail passing progressive legislation like crisis relief centers, updated voter registration, enhanced pay for public servants, and safeguarding reproductive rights. Sen. Randall also announced she is running for Congress in 2024.

TEXAS

(ended Republican supermajority in 2018)

Amidst nationwide efforts to restrict and ban access to reproductive healthcare, **Representative Ann Johnson ('18)** fought hard to pass bills shielding medical professionals from prosecution and extending insurance coverage for contraceptive drugs, putting Republicans on the record in opposing these popular measures.



MOVING ON UP

State legislatures are a critical resource in the pipeline of developing national leadership. For example, nearly half of all presidents first held state legislative office, and about half of all members of Congress. This year, Sister District alumni are making waves as they aim for higher offices. **We endorsed almost all of these candidates in their very first runs for public office**, and our early support was critical to building their name recognition and viability.



WASHINGTON STATE SENATOR EMILY RANDALL

Running for Congress in 2024. She would be the first LGBTQ+ person to serve in the state's Congressional delegation, the first openly LGBTQ+ Latina to serve in Congress, and one of fewer than ten openly queer women to ever be elected to Congress. Sister District supported her as a first-time candidate in 2018.



WASHINGTON STATE SENATOR MANKA DHINGRA

Running for Washington State Attorney General. Dhingra is the first Sikh elected to any state legislature in the United States, and would be the first person of color, and only the second woman, to serve as Washington AG. Sister District supported her as a first-time candidate in 2017.



VIRGINIA SENATOR-ELECT DANICA ROEM

Elected to the Virginia Senate, making her the first out transgender State Senator in the South. Her win is especially important in a region that continues to restrict or outright ban reproductive and transgender healthcare and criminalize LGBTQ+ youth. Sister District supported her as a first-time candidate in 2017, and in her bid for moving up to the State Senate in 2023.



VIRGINIA DELEGATE BRIANA SEWELL

Running for Virginia's 7th Congressional District. This will be one of the most hotly contested races in the nation. Sister District supported Sewell in 2021.



VIRGINIA DELEGATE ELIZABETH GUZMAN

Also running for Virginia's 7th Congressional District. We are proud to have more than one alumnae running. Sister District supported Guzman as a first-time candidate in 2017.



VIRGINIA DELEGATE DAVID REID

Running for Congress in District 10. He'll face tough competition, with eight Democrats and two Republicans already declared in the race. Sister District supported Reid as a first-time candidate in 2017.



SISTER DISTRICT WAS ABSOLUTELY A KEY PART OF HOW WE WON THIS RACE. THEY WERE INVOLVED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, JUST LIKE THEY WERE INVOLVED IN MY RACE IN 2017. THE FUNDRAISING, PHONE CALLS, TEXTS, AND POSTCARDS FROM AFAR ENABLED MY TEAM TO PRIORITIZE FACE-TO-FACE CONVERSATIONS ON THE DOORS. **FROM DAY ONE TO ELECTION DAY, SISTER DISTRICT HAD MY BACK.**

- Virginia Senator-Elect Danica Roem





CANDIDATE SUPPORT

Fundraising

- Total: \$559,768.54
- Average \$59,977 per candidate
- Average 77% of our funds were raised before September 1
- Average 8% of each candidates' total raise before September 1
- Average donation size for candidates: \$55



SDP exponentially grew our national network of grassroots donors and volunteers in a way that would otherwise have been unattainable for a state legislative campaign like ours.

—Sam Boorstyn, Deputy Campaign Manager for Delegate-Elect Phil Hernandez

Field Outreach

Reached out to 377,435 total voters, through:

- 328,469 calls
- 25,312 postcards
- 19,555 texts
- 4,099 doors

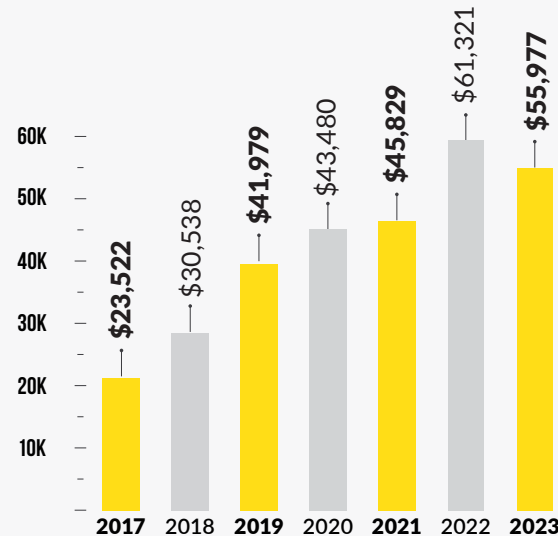
And on average:

- 43% of our candidates' calls were made by Sister District to voters
- 40% of our calls were made before Sept 1

Demographics

- 10 candidates
- 50% women
- 40% people of color
- 40% repeat endorsements

Fundraising over time



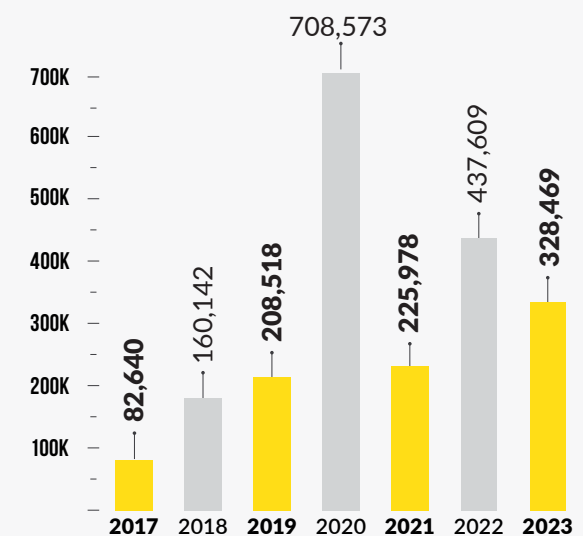
Average money raised per candidate since our founding. Highlighted years indicate previous Virginia cycles.



*Summer is a difficult time to fundraise and without Sister District, we would not have had the funds to pay our staff. The phone banking during the summer was also super helpful. Starting the phone banking early and focusing on the rural areas early [...] allowed us to move on to absentee voters and “chase” the ballots as Election Day gets closer. **Most of the district is very rural and phone banking is a critical way to communicate to voters.** I am really grateful for the help that you all have provided to our team. Thank you!*

– Delegate-Elect Amy Laufer

Calls over time



Average calls made per candidate since our founding. Highlighted years indicate previous Virginia cycles

Candidate Services

Through our Campaign Services program, Sister District's political team provides individualized support to our candidates and their staff, leveraging their years of experience to help fill gaps. In particular, campaigns view Sister District staff as experts on building strong field campaigns, offering both guidance and hands-on help to achieve campaign goals. This year, we completed more than 40 special projects, including:

- Building voter universes for candidates
- Helping candidates hire key staff
- Advising candidates on paid communications and digital strategies
- Helping candidates with vendor relationships



- Advising candidates on field and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) plans
- Hosting candidate messaging and communications trainings



Sister District has been a fantastic partner to the Joshua Cole campaign. The campaign's operation and structures are seamless and so, so helpful. It is rare to find not only such an easy organization to work with but also one that provides great resources, like fundraising and direct voter contact.

– Alessia Modjarrad,

Campaign Manager for Delegate-Elect Joshua Cole

Campaign satisfaction

We survey our candidates and their staff twice during the electoral cycle to assess how well we're doing and what could be improved. This year, our campaigns were highly satisfied with the work Sister District did to help their campaigns. 15 people representing all 10 campaigns responded. This scale was out of a total of 10.

- In relation to other national groups that provided you with fundraising support, how valuable was Sister District? **Average answer: 9.5**
- How satisfied are you with Sister District's field support of your campaign? **Average answer: 9.56**
- How satisfied are you with Sister District volunteers? **Average answer: 9.7**
- 100% of respondents rated our political staff **10**

VOLUNTEERS & ORGANIZING

Sister District volunteers engage in a mix of activities including supporting our endorsed candidates through field and fundraising, boosting our State

Bridges partners with small dollar donations, and civic education and engagement. Most volunteers are organized into teams based on geography, and each team is assigned 1-3 candidates in a strategic state to support over an election cycle.

In 2023 we had:

- 61 teams and affiliates
- 241 team leaders
- 380 phonebanks
- 83 fundraisers
- 91 other events



Sister District Summit

In February, we held our 6th Annual Summit, featuring conversations with alumni candidates, workshops, and panels discussing pressing issues. The event featured special guests, including a keynote fireside chat with Anat Shenker-Osorio and appearances by Sister District alumnae NC Rep. Deb Butler and AZ Rep. Lorena Austin. The event was held in Berkeley, CA, and had more than 100 volunteer leaders in attendance from around the country. It was sponsored by industry giants Action Network, ActBlue, New Media Ventures, and Emerge.



Fellowship Program

We hit another impressive milestone in 2023, with our biggest class of phonebank, GOTV, and fall organizing fellows yet, with 49 participants in the program. Our fellows—primarily high school, college students, and career-switchers—receive a generous paid stipend and add critical capacity to our team while gaining valuable hands-on field experience to become future organizers, field and political directors, and campaign managers. Fellows supported our voter outreach, mobilization, and candidate support efforts to win in Virginia.

49 Fellowships:

- 24 Organizing Fellows
- 7 Phonebank Fellows
- 15 GOTV Fellows
- 1 Organizing Program and Logistics Fellow
- 2 National Phonebank Hosts



This fellowship has bolstered my resume and given me the experience many employers are looking for when it comes to hiring organizers.

– Hilarie DeCesare,
2023 Organizing Fellow and
Organizing Program and Logistics Fellow

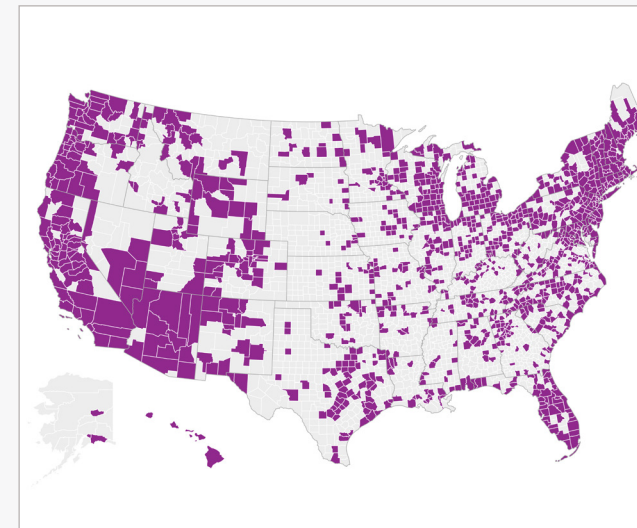
“I am currently a Political Science and Sociology major at Maryville College and plan to go into campaign work in the future. This fellowship has been the perfect opportunity to take my first steps in and really solidify my passion for progressive politics.”

– Ava Beggs,
2023 Organizing Fellow

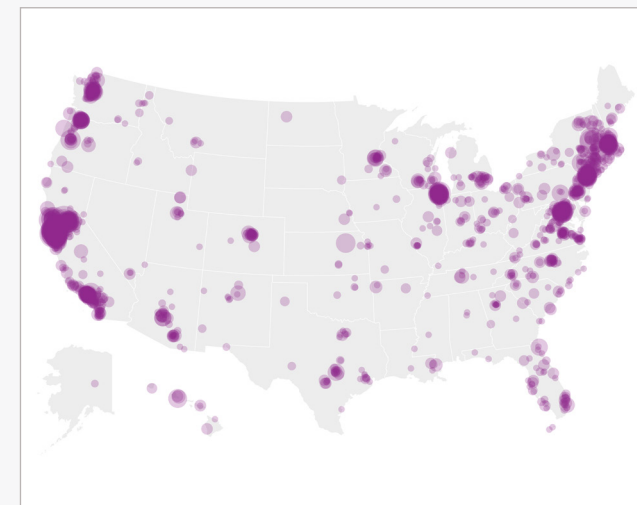
Team Satisfaction

We survey our volunteer leaders twice during the electoral cycle to assess how well we're doing and what could be improved. Our volunteers were highly satisfied being a part of the Sister District community and felt they truly contributed to our mission. Responses were translated to a 10-point scale.

- How satisfied are you with the official Sister District candidates you were assigned to work with this cycle? **Average rating: 10**
- My team feels that they helped move the needle in critical state elections. **Average rating: 9.3**
- My team felt good about their work, even for Sister District candidates that did not win their races. **Average rating: 9.3**
- My team feels like a valued part of the Sister District organization. **Average rating: 9.3**
- My team feels energized to continue working with Sister District in 2024. **Average rating: 9.1**
- My team feels that Sister District helped to deepen their commitment to civic engagement. **Average rating: 9.3**



2023 Volunteer Activity by County



Donations made in 2023 to Sister District Project endorsed candidates, to SDAN State Bridges organizations, and to Sister District.



Future Winners

The bi-annual Future Winners program, established by Sister District and run in partnership with EMILY's List and the DLCC for 2023, works to shore up the pipeline of progressive state legislative candidates by investing in exceptional candidates who came up a bit short in their last run. This year we had:

- 28 Participants
- 18 States
- 79% Women
- 24% LGBTQIA+
- 28% People of Color
- 31% Disabled
- 17% Immigrants

State Bridges (SDAN)

State Bridges helps us lay the groundwork for electoral victories in key states by supporting local power-building organizations and the activists that lead them, with \$507,695.62 raised for partners since launch.

2023 was the third year the State Bridges program was in effect, and we:

- Held 5 virtual fundraiser events
- Supported 8 organizations in 5 states
- Raised \$126,434.90 for partners
 - From 4,020 individual donations
 - Average \$15,804 per partner
 - Average \$31.45 donation size

2023 Partner Organizations:

- **Virginia:** New Virginia Majority
- **Wisconsin:** Citizen Action of Wisconsin, WISDOM
- **Pennsylvania:** Pennsylvania Stands Up, Pennsylvania United
- **Nevada:** One APIA Nevada

- **Arizona:** Living United for Change in Arizona (LUCHA), Rural Arizona Action (RAZA)

We launched State Bridges because the electoral gains we are eager to see are closely linked to the year-round efforts of grassroots organizing operations, often led by people of color and centering the voices of those most impacted by state policies.

- 50% of 2023 State Bridges partner organizations are led by people of color
- 62.5% of 2023 State Bridges partner organizations are led by women



Purple District Network (SDAN)

The Purple District Network is the only state legislator network exclusively focused on providing support to state legislators in frontline districts. We build community among these leaders and provide them with the tools they need to best serve their communities. Cohorts are organized around the type of government the legislator is seated in—blue trifecta, red trifecta, and divided government—to promote targeted, actionable conversations.

2023 Purple District Network Cohort:

- Number of State Legislators: 92
- Number of States Represented: 28
- Number of convenings held in 2023: 5
- Blue Trifecta: 31 members
- Red Trifecta: 20 members
- Divided Government: 41 members
- % women legislators: 74%
- % people of color legislators: 42%



*The gathering space provided within the Purple District Network has become not just a hub for strategy but a thriving community. **With Sister District, it's not just about winning elections; it's about winning for the people.***

– Arizona Representative Lorena Austin

In 2023, we formed an Advisory Committee to inform programming decisions for the network:

- Representative Lorena Austin (AZ)
- Representative Deb Butler (NC)
- Representative Shea Roberts (GA)

We also created a Black Women's Caucus to further deepen the relationship amongst Purple District Network members. This caucus aims to enhance the understanding of the unique intersectionality of the personal backgrounds of Black women in frontline legislative districts and the districts they serve. The caucus has 3 co-chairs and 17 members.

Co-chairs:

- Senator Sydney Batch (NC)
- Representative Pamela Herndon (NM)
- Delegate Briana Sewell (VA)



Narrative Change (SDAN)

Sister District Action Network's Narrative Change Program seeks to educate the public about the power and promise of states by running great content and programs and building our brand as thought leaders, particularly through partnerships.*

In 2023 we kicked off the program by:

- Publishing 8 pieces in Teen Vogue in the "Historic Firsts in our State Houses" series featuring state legislators Lorena Austin, Irene Shin, Ruwa Romman, Tarra Simmons, Emily Randall, Jeramey Anderson, Clare Oumou Verbeten, and Edgar Gonzalez.
- Partnering with Slow Clap for a deep landscape analysis and Data For Progress to complete five focus groups and field a survey of 5,000+ voters in battleground states to understand why voters don't vote all the way down the ballot.

* This work is non-partisan.



On my first day in the General Assembly, a lobbyist and I were making small talk in the elevator. When I reached my floor, the lobbyist asked, "Whose office do you work for?" I was so caught off guard, unsure how to respond. So I said the first thing that came to mind: "I work for the people of the 86th District."

– Virginia Delegate Irene Shin, in *Teen Vogue*

Research & Experiments (SDAN)

SDAN's award-winning research team specializes in political research and civic engagement, focusing on topics like voter behavior, volunteer engagement, outreach methods, and messaging. We are honored

to work alongside researchers at institutions like the Voter Participation Center, the Mississippi NAACP, Virginia Tech, and the University of Michigan.

This year, we published four research studies:

- **Insurrectionist Accountability: Texting Voters about Candidate Participation in the January 6 Insurrection.** Tested whether voters who received a text message about a local state house or senate candidate's participation in the January 6, 2021 insurrection made them more or less likely to vote in the November 2022 general election.
- **How Much Handwriting Matters? Measuring Downstream Effects of Postcards to Voters.** Measured the downstream (general election) effects of sending completely or partially handwritten postcards with pro-choice messaging to likely pro-choice voters in Arizona ahead of the 2022 primary.
- **Values-Matched Messaging Replication: Holding Anti-Abortion Legislators to Account.** Tested the effect on turnout of receiving a handwritten postcard highlighting the policy votes that a voter's state legislative representative cast in opposition to the modeled policy position of the voter.
- **Rings of Three, Leave it Be: Testing the Three Rings Approach to Phonebanking.** Tested the trade-offs between contact rate and the number of conversations with two methods of phonebank calling: letting the phone ring through to voicemail or hanging up the phone if it hasn't been answered in three rings.

Voter Roll-Off Research

We analyzed vote totals from 2022 to learn more about down-ballot roll-off, investigating the consequences of skipping over state legislative races on the ballot:

- Across 10 battleground states in 2022, we

estimated the percentage of voters in each district who voted in a top-of-the-ticket race (for governor or U.S. Senate) but not in their state legislative races. The average rate of roll-off was about 7%.

- Narrow win margins in state legislative races show the importance of voting down-ballot:
 - MN HD 14A: Democratic state house candidate Tamara Calhoun received 7,060 votes. Democratic Gov. Tim Walz received 7,728 votes in the district—only 218 more than Calhoun. Calhoun lost the race by 199 votes.
 - GA HD 117: Democratic state legislative candidate Demetrius Rucker received 12,949 votes, while U.S. Sen. Raphael Warnock (D) received 746 more votes in the district (13,695). Rucker lost by 386 votes.



These findings galvanized us to kick off an ambitious new research program encompassing multiple projects and methods—focus groups, a large-scale survey, message development and testing—with the goal of understanding the types of voters who tend to roll off and their reasons why, and what we can do to counteract this behavior. We'll be sharing more about this program in 2024.



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SISTER DISTRICT

Staff 2023

