



The White Working Class R O U N D T A B L E

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A MEMO FOR CANDIDATES:

FIVE FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES
DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES MUST
GET RIGHT IF THEY WANT TO WIN THE
SUPPORT OF NON-RACIST
WHITE WORKING CLASS AMERICANS

BY

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FIVE FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGES DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATES MUST GET RIGHT IF THEY WANT TO WIN THE SUPPORT OF NON-RACIST WHITE WORKING CLASS AMERICANS

By ANDREW LEVISON

To successfully run for office in districts with a substantial number of white working class voters, a Democratic candidate must have a coherent long term plan for winning the support of the persuadable non-racist sector of working Americans that goes far beyond simply laying out a series of programs and policies. Candidates must demonstrate in a variety of ways that they genuinely understand the problems and share the hopes and aspirations of non-racist white working people in their district and are committed to being genuinely “on their side”.*

To assist potential Democratic candidates in confronting this challenge, last winter a group of well-known analysts of white working class America joined together to look beyond the usual focus on simply creating a laundry list of progressive policies and programs. The 12 analysts participating in the 2017 White Working Class Roundtable focused instead on developing the kind of ideas and information Democratic candidates need in order to successfully reach out and appeal to white working people.

These 12 papers have been published as a book, *Democrats and the White Working Class*¹, and can be ordered from Amazon or read on the website of [The White Working Class Roundtable](#).²

The introduction to the book, written by the four organizers of the Roundtable—Stan Greenberg, Ruy Teixeira, Harold Meyerson and Karen Nussbaum—sets out five major recommendations that were widely shared among the contributors.

Andrew Levison is the author of [The White Working Class Today: Who They Are, How They Think and How Progressives Can Regain Their Support](#). Along with Ed Kilgore, he is coordinator of [the white working class roundtables](#).

Note: In the period after World War II the definition of the term “working class” was based on occupation and generally referred to factory and other primarily male manual workers. With the decline in manufacturing and the massive entrance of women into the work force since that time, the term has gained a broader meaning and also now includes many male and female service workers and lower level clerical and sales workers. As it happens, there is a very substantial overlap between people who work in these kinds of occupations and those who have only a high school or less than a college education (close to 80% in the case of white males with only a high school education). Since it is vastly easier to ask poll respondents about their level of education than it is about their specific occupation, virtually all opinion poll analysts now use the level of education as the practical operational definition of “working class” (for a more detailed discussion of this issue, see *The White Working Class Today*, Chapter 3).

¹https://www.amazon.com/Democrats-White-Working-Class-Roundtable/dp/1546788395/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1518212550&sr=8-1&keywords=Democrats+and+the+White+Working+Class

²<http://thedemocraticstrategist-roundtables.com/>

Recommendation 1

Progressives and Democrats should focus on the “persuadable” sector of the white working class. Data from every research method and technique indicates that there are substantial numbers of white working class Trump voters who do not genuinely share Trump’s bigotry and intolerance and who will become increasingly disillusioned as he betrays more and more of his populist campaign promises. The challenge for Democratic candidates will not be to change the minds of the substantial group of racists and bigots who are indeed among Trump’s most committed supporters but rather to present a progressive alternative that the more tolerant men and women in white working class America can find genuinely convincing and believable.

What do we really know about this issue?

During the 2016 campaign and after Trump’s election a tremendous number of articles appeared that attempted to explain his white working class appeal. The most fundamental debate that emerged was whether his white working class support had been fundamentally based on his overt appeal to racism and bigotry or if it had been based instead on his appeal to working Americans’ genuine economic problems and grievances.

A large number of the many articles and commentaries that appeared, however, provided very little real insight because they jumbled together statistics and concepts regarding two profoundly distinct groups: “white working class voters” and “white working class **Trump** voters” as if they were one and the same. Since almost a third of white working class voters voted for Hillary Clinton, it should have been obvious that statistics about the two groups were not interchangeable but many articles failed to make the distinction. Other articles presented polling data showing that significant percentages of white working people did indeed express a variety of intolerant opinions but did not provide any evidence that it was those particular opinions rather than others that were actually the most important cause of their vote for Trump rather than Clinton.

A number of the most carefully designed, more systematic studies, however, did attempt to actually measure the relative importance of economic and racial/nativist opinions and a number of these studies did seem to suggest that racial and nativist attitudes played a greater role than did economic distress or discontent.

For example, in early 2016 Ipsos Global Marketing and Opinion Research conducted a series of opinion surveys with over 5,000 respondents that compared the relative importance of authoritarianism, populism and nativism in Trump’s appeal. Their conclusion:

“Simply put, it’s all about nativism. Those who support Trump are much more likely to hold strong nativist and anti-immigrant beliefs. Nativism is the most impactful driver of support for Trump.”³

A second widely quoted study, published by the Democracy Fund Voter Study Group in May 2017, came to a similar conclusion:

³<https://spotlight.ipsos-na.com/index.php/news/its-nativism-explaining-the-drivers-of-trumps-popular-support/>

"The primary conflict structuring the two parties involves questions of national identity, race and morality, while the traditional conflict over economics, though still important, is less divisive than it used to be...By making questions of national identity more salient Donald Trump succeeded in winning over populists (socially conservative, economically liberal voters) who had previously voted for Democrats."⁴

It is important to note, however, that neither of these studies focused specifically on white working class voters, making their conclusions less than certain as regards the views of white working people in particular. Another extensive study of 3,000 respondents by the Public Religion Research Institute, on the other hand, did look specifically at white working class voters and reached a similar conclusion:

"Overall our model demonstrates that besides partisanship, fears about immigrants and cultural displacement were more powerful factors than economic concerns in predicting support for Trump among white working class voters."⁵

Although other analyses pushed back against this view, the general conclusion of these studies was that, if nativist views did not dominate these voters' political choices, they had at least equal weight with economic concerns.

But from the practical point of view of a Democratic candidate who is seeking guidance about how to appeal to white working class voters, this entire discussion was actually of very little use because it was essentially based on visualizing either what a "typical" white worker thought or what "most" white workers thought rather than what a Democratic candidate really needed to know which was what *particular groups or types of white workers* might be susceptible to Democratic persuasion.

One study which did attempt to create a psychological typology of the different types of Trump voters, a Democracy Fund Voter Group study titled "*The Five Types of Trump Voters*"⁶ noted the profound limitations of the view that "all Trump voters are basically similar." As the author, Emile Akins noted:

Election observers have sought a straightforward explanation for Trump's success, such as Rust-Belt anxieties, the plight of the white working class, racism, nativism, nationalism, authoritarianism, collective narcissism, Americanism, and so forth. Many also acknowledge that a combination of these factors may have been key.

Throughout most of the debate, however, there has been a tendency to think of Trump voters as a homogenous bloc with similar tastes and motivations. Articles give rise to the impression that most Trump voters are driven by the same motivations and policy priorities. Furthermore, the presumption has been that since Trump has belabored the immigration issue his voters must also share his immigration concerns.*

* **Note:** Speaking of the kinds of surveys noted in the paragraphs above, Akins adds: "Political science research has tended to use regression analysis [a common statistical technique] to identify which dispositions best predict voting for Trump. These models inherently assume each Trump voter places equal weight on each policy issue measured. For example, if a model finds that immigration anxieties are highly predictive of a Trump vote, many assume this means all Trump voters are equally highly anxious about immigration. **It may be, however, that some are concerned about immigration, while others are not. These models cannot distinguish between the two possibilities.**"

⁴<https://www.voterstudygroup.org/reports/2016-elections/political-divisions-in-2016-and-beyond>

⁵<https://www.prrri.org/research/white-working-class-attitudes-economy-trade-immigration-election-donald-trump/>

⁶<https://www.voterstudygroup.org/reports/2016-elections/the-five-types-trump-voters>

There is reason to believe, however, that different kinds of Trump voters cast their November ballots for a variety of very distinct reasons.

As polling specialist Guy Molyneux noted in his contribution to the book *Democrats and the White Working Class*:

Progressives must recognize that the white working class is not a monolith, but contains a wide diversity of political views. About half of non-college-educated whites identify as conservatives, and nearly all of them have become reliable Republican voters. On the other end of the spectrum is a small group of liberals, who regularly vote for Democrats. Consequently, most working-class whites are either completely unavailable to progressive candidates or (less commonly) already in the progressive camp.

In between is a critically important subset of potentially persuadable voters, the white working-class moderates, or “WWCMs.” About 35 percent of working-class whites have moderate or “middle of the road” political views, which means WWCMs represent about 15 percent of the overall electorate, or approximately 23 million registered voters. While Trump won the working class conservatives by an overwhelming 85 points (Clinton got a mere 6 percent), he had a much smaller 26-point margin among the WWCMs. That margin is double Mitt Romney’s 13-point edge in 2012, and this swing had a decisive impact. **If Clinton had performed as well as Obama with those white working class moderates, it would have doubled her national popular vote margin from 2 percent to 4 percent.**⁷

Insights derived from focus groups and the conversations conducted by door to door political canvassing campaigns add greater depth to the polling data. They reveal that a basic division between white working people is between the relatively tolerant and the relatively intolerant. This is a personality characteristic as much as a political opinion. As one summary of research conducted by Working America, noted:

The white working class is divided into three very distinct ideological groups. This central fact is one of the key conclusions that emerged from one of the most in-depth studies of white workers in the rust belt, a study conducted by Working America, the largest progressive grass-roots organizing effort in white working class America. During a period of five weeks in December and January 2016 they conducted door to door interviews with 1,689 white working class voters in working class neighborhoods in Cleveland and Pittsburg. This is a larger number of interviews than in most national opinion polls and involved far more extensive in-depth conversations.

This research reaffirmed the results of previous Working America surveys which had found that there are three very distinct ideological groups within white working class America. The first group is composed of firm conservatives who have substantially internalized the Rush Limbaugh-Fox News right-wing vision of America and who are therefore entirely resistant to any conceivable Democratic appeal. The second group is composed of

⁷<http://prospect.org/article/mapping-white-working-class>

firmly progressive and Democratic white working people. Among older workers these are voters who still remember and uphold the progressive traditions of the trade union movement and the New Deal...

The final sector of the white working class is what the Working America study termed “Fed up voters who value being independent but had little information.” In fact, Working America’s door to door canvassing has revealed that many white working people who voted for Trump and other Republican candidates do not fit the stereotype of the bitterly angry, intolerant ultra-conservative. Rather, It is often a pleasant, easy-going, basically down-to-earth man or woman who opens the door, one who cares very little about politics or Rush Limbaugh conservative ideology and instead likes to “use common sense”, “think for themselves” and “see both sides” of an issue.

What this implies is that no “one message fits all workers” strategy can successfully compete with Donald Trump for the votes of white working class Americans.⁸

What are the practical implications for potential Democratic candidates?

Candidates should begin with simple fact; you will never win bigoted white working class voters so don't even try. Don't visualize a “typical white worker” who combines some complex mixture of bigotry and legitimate economic distress. Instead, picture two very distinct groups—the intolerant bigots who are the core of Donald Trump’s base and the substantial number of generally non-bigoted working people who basically don't resent other people but were attracted to Trump for different reasons.

*In your campaign don't try to blur the difference between these two groups. On the contrary, point it out. Highlight the distinction. Direct your appeal specifically to the tolerant working men and women in America and identify with their legitimate concerns and honor them precisely for their lack of bigotry. Go back to the vision Democrats use to have of their white working class supporters back in the Roosevelt coalition days—the decent, hardworking, good-hearted honest men and women that Democrats once admired and respected. There are still lots and lots of working people like that in America and they are the voters that you actually **can win** and that you actually **want to win** in your campaign.*

Recommendation Two

Progressive candidates must not only offer populist economic proposals but also a firm commitment to profoundly reforming both government at every level and also the Democratic Party itself. White working Americans are not simply cynical about the role of big money in politics. They have also become convinced that government policies and programs invariably end up benefiting either the wealthy or the undeserving poor but never themselves. They also believe that Democrats have absolutely no commitment to serious reform of this corrupt system. Many white working Americans who might otherwise be “persuadable” will simply refuse to vote for Democrats until this perception is changed.

What do we really know about this issue?

The post-war New Deal Democratic coalition that included white working people during the 1950's and 1960's was united by the widespread belief that the Roosevelt administration's progressive policies, which included social security, support for trade unions and active economic policies to

⁸http://www.thedemocraticstrategist.org/_memos/tds_SM_Levison_Trump_not_winning_vf.pdf

achieve full employment, had been vital and essential reforms which proved the need for continuing government intervention in the “free market” that Republicans, in contrast, continued to support and admire.

This faith by white working people eroded in the late 60’s and early 70’s as the “White Backlash” developed in response to urban riot and rising crime as well as to laws and policies like school bussing and the expansion of welfare. By the late 1970’s this intense backlash had profoundly soured white working people’s support for the Democratic Party. Ethnographic field studies in the 1970’s like Jonathan Reider’s: *Canarsie: Jews and Italians against liberalism*⁹ and Samuel Friedman *The Inheritance*¹⁰ provided the most in-depth view of how formerly committed new deal Democrats became deeply disillusioned with their former political party and began to view it as an advocate for African-Americans and limousine liberals rather than themselves.

This largely race-based rejection of Democrats and the government was then reinforced during the Reagan administration by the conservative campaign that defined government itself the enemy. Reagan popularized the slogan “Government is the problem, not the solution” and the newly created network of conservative think tanks developed a vast array of policy recommendations and political messaging aimed at discrediting all government action. By the early 90’s this philosophy had become so deeply embedded that a leading conservative activist like Grover Norquist could openly boast of hoping to “*shrink government to the size where it could be drowned in a bathtub.*”

Along with the parallel strands of white backlash and conservative anti-government propaganda, however, there was another distinct and profoundly important strand of anti-government sentiment in white working class America. It was based on the recognition that as TV based political campaigns replaced precinct and neighborhood level political organizations, politics had increasingly become a rich man’s sport that only those with access to vast sums of money could play.

In their 1995 book, *Congress as Public Enemy*¹¹, political scientists John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theis-Morse described the views of the “average American” participants in their focus groups as follows:

The American people have come to believe that the political system is run by a powerful professional political class (cut off from ordinary people) and that votes no longer make much difference because money rules...people believe that the Washington system runs on greed and special privilege.

They noted, in fact, that this perception was so strong that for many white working class Americans it represented “a new form of class consciousness.”

In fact, the continuity and connection between this view and the class consciousness of the previous 1930’s trade union era could be seen in the fact that for most white working class Americans the popular Roosevelt-era caricature of the immoral, top hatted millionaire, swilling champagne while orphans starved had been completely replaced by the modern vision of the venal and corrupt politician, making back room deals with cynical lobbyists in return for fat campaign contributions.

⁹https://www.amazon.com/Canarsie-Italians-Brooklyn-Liberalism-Paperback/dp/B015QNKOP6/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1504128461&sr=8-3&keywords=Canarsie%3A+Jews+and+Italians+against+liberalism

¹⁰<https://www.amazon.com/Inheritance-Families-America-Roosevelt-Reagan/dp/0684811162>

¹¹https://www.amazon.com/Congress-Public-Enemy-Institutions-Psychology/dp/0521483360/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1504128882&sr=8-1&keywords=Congress+as+Public+Enemy

The observer who has most carefully studied this subject over the years is polling expert Stan Greenberg and his organization Democracy Corps. In a 2011 New York Times op-ed he summarized the research he had conducted during the 2000's:

For the last decade, I have conducted monthly polls digging into America's mood and studying how progressives can develop successful electoral strategies.

In analyzing these polls, I see clearly that voters feel ever more estranged from government—and that they associate Democrats with government... (Democrats) can recite their good plans as a mantra and raise their voices as if they had not been heard, but voters will not listen to them if government is disreputable.

... In smaller, more probing focus groups, voters show they are profoundly cynical about Democratic politicians' stands. They tune out the politicians' fine speeches and plans and express sentiments like these: "It's just words." "There's just such a control of government by the wealthy that whatever happens, it's not working for all the people; it's working for a few of the people." "We don't have a representative government anymore"...they tell me that they think the game is rigged and that the wealthy and big industries get policies that reinforce their advantage. And they do not think their voices matter.

... Voters will respond strongly to Democratic messages on the economy only when a party leader declares, "We have to start by changing Washington ...The middle class won't catch a break until we confront the power of money and the lobbyists."¹²

Since 2011 Democracy Corps has continued to conduct the most sustained and extensive polling research to study white working class attitudes about systemic political corruption. The polling data Democracy Corps has accumulated on this subject now includes over 12,000 individual poll interviews and includes numerous tests of different messages and policies to confront this issue.

The titles of Democracy Corps memos suggest the broad scope of this research:

- Jan 19, 2012 – *Two years after citizens united, voters fed up with money in politics*
- May 2012 – *Money in politics is a ballot box issue*
- October 2012 – *In congressional battleground, voters intensely concerned about money in politics*
- November 2012 – *Voters push back against big money politics*
- Nov 2013 – *Revolt against Washington and corrupted politics*
- Nov 2014 – *Voters ready to act against big money in politics—lessons from the 2014 midterm election*

¹²http://www.nytimes.com/2011/07/31/opinion/sunday/tuning-out-the-democrats.html?_r=2&scp=1&sq=Greenberg%20Quinlan&st=cse

- July 2014 – *An idea whose time has come—battling big money in the senate battleground*
- December 2015 – *Winning with a middle class reform politics and government message*
- Feb 2016 – *Reform and a winning 2016 strategy*

In 2015, in the Second White Working Class Roundtable, Greenberg restated his conclusions as follows:

White working class voters are open to an expansive Democratic economic agenda—to more benefits for child care and higher education, to tax hikes on the wealthy, to investment in infrastructure spending, and to economic policies that lead employers to boost salaries for middle- and working-class Americans, especially women. *Yet they are only ready to listen when they think that Democrats understand their deeply held belief that politics has been corrupted and government has failed. Championing reform of government and the political process is the price of admission with these voters.*

In the interview research cited in the Roundtable book, *Democrats and the White Working Class*, this uniformly cynical view was expressed again and again:

“They [politicians] all come out millionaires”

“The majority of politicians have sold their soul for the almighty dollar”

Everybody that’s in the government is a lawyer. They are from very well-to-do families. They’ve always had everyone doing things for them, and they’re silver spoon in the mouth kind of people. They don’t understand the little people like average Americans because they’re not average Americans so they don’t see the real problems.

What are the practical implications for potential Democratic candidates?

*There are a whole slew of progressive proposals in both the [House](#)¹³ and [Senate](#)¹⁴ for reforming the system and removing big money from politics. But let’s face it. There is now so much cynicism about government that your promising to support or enact big reforms is just not credible. What working people will find vastly more convincing and meaningful is a political candidates’ **demonstrable and verifiable personal commitment** to conduct **himself or herself** with genuine honesty and integrity if elected.*

This is the kind of candidate that white working class voters passionately desire. Just look at the words groups of white working people used when they were asked to describe the kind of politicians they wanted.

Candidates who see politics as public service, not a way to make money

Candidates who focus on the needs of the people and not the special interests

Candidates who care about the people of the country instead of just making their wallets bigger

¹³<http://prospect.org/article/democratic-party%E2%80%99s-better-deal-good-enough>

¹⁴<http://prospect.org/article/can-democracy-reform-agenda-help-democrats-win-back-senate>

Candidates who are motivated by the needs of everyday citizens and not the high-dollar contributors

Candidates who are not bought or corrupt

Candidates who don't make getting rich their guiding principle

One has to personally observe the focus groups to feel the incredible passion with which working people express these views. In their minds, nothing will ever really change until voters start electing candidates with genuine personal honesty and integrity. So look for the ways to draw sharp and dramatic contrasts between you and your opponents on personal integrity—make a commitment to fund your campaign with small donor contributions, for example, or to reject contributions from unidentified sources or from specific industries that are known to make large campaign donations in return for special favors. Find the issues that most clearly demonstrate the difference between you and your opponents on this issue and then hammer away at those differences like a jackhammer on cement in every single speech and every campaign ad you produce.

Recommendation 3

*Progressives and Democrats must offer voters political candidates who are committed to genuinely **representing** white working class Americans and not simply to promising them a preselected platform of liberal programs and policies. The persuadable sector of the white working class does not need to be offered appeals to racism or other right-wing views but they must absolutely feel that a Democratic candidate seeking their vote will be their firm and passionate advocate—someone who will be deeply committed to understanding their real day-to-day problems and representing their needs and interests in the political system. Donald Trump's most potent appeal to white working class voters was his charge that all of the other candidates did not even make a pretence of sincerely wanting to specifically represent white workers while he, on the other hand, promised to be totally and exclusively "their man" and sincerely "on their side."*

What do we really know about this issue?

The essential problem a Democratic candidate faces in appealing to white working class voters is the fact that the Democratic victories are generally based on uniting a very diverse coalition of minorities, liberals, youth, single women and educated professionals. Although these groups have a range of quite divergent interests and perspectives, they usually see themselves as benefiting from participation in a wide coalition.

Despite a range of Democratic economic policies that are objectively in their economic interest, white working class Americans simply do not share this perspective. On the contrary, they feel that the Democratic coalition is directly opposed to them and their needs and wellbeing.

In her book, *The Politics of Resentment*, the sociologist Catherine Kramer describes her extensive field research among the small town and rural residents of Wisconsin, most of whom had only high school or less than college education.*

* **Note:** Although the white working class has been traditionally visualized as factory workers in the industrial cities of the Midwest, with the decline of traditional manufacturing, men and women with a high school or less than college education are today disproportionately represented in small towns and rural areas. This makes the urban/rural and Blue State/Red State distinctions overlap the distinction between working class and higher level occupations.

Since May 2007, I have been studying this resentment by inviting myself into the conversations of people in dozens of communities across Wisconsin. Groups of regulars in gas stations, diners, churches and other gathering spots have allowed me to listen as they visited with one another. The typical person in these groups was a white, older male, but not exclusively so.

...Simply put, the people I listened to felt like they were on the short end of the stick. They felt they were not getting their fair share of power, resources or respect. They said that the big decisions that regulated and affected their lives were made far away in the cities. They felt that no one was listening to their own ideas about how things should be done or what needed attention.

...Finally, they resented that they were not getting respect. They perceived that city folks called people like them ignorant racists who could not figure out their own interests. To them, urban types just did not get small-town life—what people in those places value, the way they live, and the challenges they face.

Onto this terrain trod Trump. And he found firm footing, just as Scott Walker did in his rise to the governorship. His message was basically this: “You are right. You are not getting your fair share. And you *should* be angry about it. You work hard, you are deserving, and yet you are not getting what you should. Instead, the people currently in charge are giving some people way more than they deserve. I’ll give you back what you deserve and a way of life you are sorely missing.”

*For people who were feeling ignored, disrespected and overlooked by the urban elite, the Trump campaign had a strong appeal.*¹⁵

Other sociologists and anthropologists like Jennifer Hochschild, author of *Strangers in their Own Land*, found the same sense of intense alienation from the urban based Democrats. After 6 years of field studies in the oil districts of Louisiana she summarized the feelings of the people she studied and lived with as feeling that other groups were “cutting in line” in front of them (with Democratic connivance) in the struggle to achieve the American Dream.

In districts with diverse electorates Democrats have no alternative except to try and create broad coalitions. But in the very large number of districts where white working people strongly predominate, a Democratic candidate’s problem is quite different. It is how to show a genuine identification and commitment to addressing the unique needs and problems of the people the candidate wants to represent without sacrificing basic Democratic values.

Although difficult, there are some Democrats in Republican dominated districts who have solved this problem. Their strategy begins with a complete commitment to the particular place and region that they represent.

Sociologist Justin Gest, author of *The New Minority: White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality*, interviewed a wide range of politicians, campaign strategists and regular voters to study how various Democrats succeeded in maintaining themselves in the state of Montana. As he wrote in his chapter in the book *Democrats and the White Working Class*:

¹⁵https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2016/11/13/how-rural-resentment-helps-explain-the-surprising-victory-of-donald-trump/?utm_term=.05df3850cf3a

What does Montana Governor Steve Bullock know that Hillary Clinton's army of consultants and advisors missed? Indeed, how can local politics inform a more national strategy for general elections and down-ballot races? In a predominantly white, working class state, Democrats have won four straight gubernatorial races, maintained one US Senate seat since 1913, and recently won a series of other statewide races until losing incumbents at Secretary of State and Attorney General last autumn. Do Montana Democrats have a template that can be applied elsewhere?

...Nancy Keenan, who now leads the Montana Democratic Party says: "It's authenticity, candidates have to be true to themselves. People want you be authentic, to share their experiences. When grain prices fall through the floor and the entire community is feeling the pinch, Montanans want you to understand that. You don't have to always agree with them, but you do need to look them into the eye and be honest with them.

"The Democratic Party is full of these damned do-gooders," Keenan carried on. "A lot of the people who run as Democrats think that if we could just get into the depths and detail of the policy and make people understand it, then we'll get elected. Oh Hell no! The detail doesn't matter, people! What's the first rule of politics? Show up. Everywhere. The second rule is: Show up where they didn't want or ask you to come. I used to show up at the stock growers convention or the Chamber of Commerce conventions, and they'd all ask, 'What the Hell is she doing here?'" She guffawed. "And I'd tell everyone how terrific it was to be with them."

...Brad Martin and Joe Lamson are strategists that have worked extensively in Montana. Their advice was that progressive platforms cannot be proposed without the cultural symbolism that "shows" rather than "tells" the white working class that they matter, that they belong...

"In big races, Democrats would counsel people not to talk about religion," said Martin, who once oversaw the Montana Democratic Party and now runs its Oregon counterpart. "So Democrats, who were otherwise active members in their church, would do this weird dance around their faith. Same with guns. You're teaching Democrats to deny that they're a gun owner, rather than just say, 'Yeah I'm a gun owner, but I don't need an AK-47 to kill a deer.'"

All this took away the fact that Democrats were normal people. One pollster used to say that if your answers about gun control are 30 and 40 words long, you look like a teenager caught with a six-pack of beer. You need to know the language of how people make their living, and stop comparing policy bullet points. You have to start talking about the things that affect their lives directly.

Lamson adds: "What people don't like—regardless of whether you're in a reservation, a mill town, or a black community—is the politician just showing up out of nowhere to ask for votes.

A complete commitment to represent the voters in a district is the indispensable first step but overcoming the perception of Democrats as outsiders who represent alien constituencies also requires genuinely identifying with the unique feelings and perspective of the non-racist sector of white working class voters, of genuinely seeing the world from their point of view.

This requires being able to understand and identify with a perspective different from middle class liberalism. As Joan Williams, author of *Overcoming Class Cluelessness* notes:

To me, guns mean killings among young black men, Sandy Hook and other horrors, and living in a country where mentally unstable kids regularly murder their classmates.

But even as I feel so strongly, I understand how other Americans feel differently...57% of people with post-graduate education say gun ownership endangers safety; only 35% of those with high school education or less agree. "...

*Studies of white working-class men depict the role of hunting in men's lives. Joseph Howell recounts setting off on a hunting trip with Barry Shackelford, the hard-living, alcoholic, good-hearted hero of Howell's *Hard Living on Clay Street*. Barry does not "cling" to his guns. Hunting provides him with a way of relating to nature and indulging his love of the countryside; it is a bonding experience he enjoys sharing with close friends and his son.¹⁶*

Equally, the many white working class men and women who have served in the military have been trained in the use of basic infantry weapons and do not have the visceral "I can't stand the sight of guns" or "guns frighten me" distaste and fear that many liberals feel at the sight of weapons like the standard Army assault rifle. They often will agree with sensible restrictions on firearms but do not see guns as something alien to their daily life and cultures.

The way that a progressive Democrat can neutralize the gun issue without taking a "pro-gun" position was dramatically demonstrated by Jason Kinder in the 2014 bi-elections when the Gulf War Army veteran refuted the charge that he was a typical anti-gun liberal by running a commercial in which he assembled an AR-14 assault rifle blindfolded. What he was showing was not support for right-wing NRA policies regarding guns but an authentic cultural connection with the Gulf War veterans and gun owners in his district.

On a range of other issues as well, it is important to restate the conclusion in section one: because there is a significant, relatively tolerant, non-racist sector of the white working class, it is possible for a progressive Democrats to sincerely identify with a great deal of their outlook and perspective without endorsing racist or other extremist opinions themselves.

It is, in fact, possible to authentically appeal to non-racist workers even on the most contentious issues like immigration. On the basis of extensive opinion polling, Stan Greenberg concluded:

I do believe we can speak to white working people in a way that is consistent with our values but there are things that need to be part of that conversation if we want working people to trust us. You can believe in growing legal immigration you can believe in multiculturalism. But you also have to take borders and citizenship seriously and believe that citizens genuinely do and should have a primacy over noncitizens. Democrats can only succeed if people believe that we want to seriously manage immigration and not just accept "open borders."

This view cuts across race in the focus groups I conducted. You could not tell any difference between African American workers and white workers who voted for Trump on this issue in terms of believing that immigrants have to get in line—that things are tough—and that

¹⁶<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/23/liberal-elite-its-time-to-strike-a-deal-with-the-working-class>

there is a real competition in many areas such as access to public services.

The data shows that non racist workers will support Democrats if they champion “real reform”—a package that includes controlling the border and expelling those with serious criminal records, and then providing a path to legalization and citizenship that requires that immigrants pay taxes and get behind citizens in the line for services.

These requirements for providing a path to legalization and citizenship are not and do not have to be seen as punitive; they are elements of a total package that makes providing a path to citizenship for the undocumented a reasonable proposal to white working Americans. This package can be very forcefully distinguished from “dog whistle” bigotry by noting that this kind of “real reform” is the direct alternative to conservatives’ explicitly racist platform of mass deportation or implicit *“make them so miserable that they self-deport”* harassment.

What are the practical implications for potential Democratic candidates?

In electoral districts with diverse populations, a Democratic candidate must reach out to a variety of communities and try to create a broad coalition. But in many districts where white workers are a major group of voters, a Democratic candidate must be an absolutely sincere and committed advocate and representative for the people in the community he or she hopes to represent.

Look at what white working men and women say when they are asked what kind of candidates they most avidly want. They said: “We need politicians....”

Who know real people

Who live in the community they represent

Who have walked the walk and understand Americans’ struggles

Who remember where they came from and the people they represent

Who have worked their way up by themselves without family and friends who got them where they are.

Who can be judged by their works, by what they have done in the past”

Who live their ethics in their own lives.

Republicans have won the votes of white working people again and again not by genuinely acting in this way but rather by producing slick commercials that portray them as “real Americans” and defenders of “traditional values.” In 2016, however, white workers in the Republican primaries rebelled and voted for Donald Trump in large measure as a protest against this kind of cynical and dishonest business as usual in the GOP and because Trump promised to be truly be “their guy” and genuinely “on their side.”

As disappointment and disillusion with Trump and the GOP grows, there will increasingly be an opening for Democrats who can genuinely “walk the walk” and “talk the talk” and demonstrate a sincere connection and commitment to the districts and communities they hope to represent. There are now many up

and coming Democratic candidates who do actually come from the neighborhoods and communities that they hope to represent and who have served in the military or worked with their hands or built small businesses or have a history of sincere progressive religious activity and devotion. Candidates like this will not be easily stereotyped as elitist coastal liberals who have nothing in common with ordinary people.

Recommendation 4

Progressives and Democrats must develop local, community-based political organizations in white working class America that are built from the bottom up not the top down. Massive advertising campaigns or sophisticated micro targeting will not win back the support of white working class Americans, no matter how cleverly written or precisely targeted such efforts may be. Door to door canvassing that only occurs during election seasons will not build solid and permanent support, no matter how energetic or committed the volunteers may be. The most influential political organizer is always the person who lives on the block or the neighbor next door. Trump appeared to have no formal political organization but in reality his candidacy was supported by the vast network of permanent grass roots conservative organizations that have deep neighborhood-level roots in white working class communities—the Tea Party, The NRA, pro-life groups and other organizations of the religious right.

What do we really know about this issue?

The most informed view of right wing grass-roots organization comes from Theda Skocpol, the author of *The Tea Party and the Remaking of American Conservatism*. Skocpol is a leading figure in the social scientific study of grass roots right wing organizations. *As she notes:*¹⁷

[Many] say that Trump had no organization, which was true enough for his own campaign, while Hillary Clinton had the typical well-funded presidential campaign machine.

But we on the center left seem to treat these presidential machines as organizations but they are absolutely not as effective as long-standing natural organized networks. To get some of those organizations working for him, Trump made deals to get the NRA, Christian right and GOP federated operations on his side. They have real, extensive reach into non metro areas. Democrats, in contrast, no longer have such reach beyond what a presidential campaign does on its own. Public sector and private sector unions have been decimated. And most of the rest of the Democratic-aligned infrastructure is fragmented into hundreds of little issue and identity organizations run by professionals.

HRC's narrow loss was grounded in this absent non-metro infrastructure—and Democratic Party losses in elections overall even more so.

...Democrats have to create sustained organizational reach, and not just at election time, that stretch beyond metropolitan communities and states. ... Democrats and their messages hardly penetrate at all, and they seem directed at worlds these people do not live in.

¹⁷<http://talkingpointsmemo.com/edblog/theda-skocpol-responds-to-judis>

Union leader and organizer Paul Booth, a former executive of The American Federation of State Municipal Employees who recently passed away, *echoed this point*.¹⁸

The Democrats' problem is also that they have lost much of the infrastructure through which they once delivered an economic message, and world view. In too much of America, the union hall is closed or quiet, the broadcast news comes from Fox or Sinclair, the ministers don't preach the social gospel, the high school grads with liberal ideas have moved away, and people's social media news feeds convey a completely different reality from that which liberals see.

These observers also agree that effective grass roots organizations must provide more than political activism alone. As Marshall Ganz, a leading scholar and participant in social movements since the civil rights era *notes*.¹⁹

Evangelical churches, the religious schools that Betsy DeVos helped sponsor, the local gun clubs, and the NRA are everywhere and form a robust local infrastructure for Republican politics. These local institutions have a reason to exist aside from advocacy and part of the challenge for Democrats is to grapple with that. We did a study for the Sierra Club in which we found that the groups that were most successful were the ones with recreational activities [while] the liberal advocacy groups were far less interested in interpersonal activities. One of the things people loved about the first Obama campaign was that they were campaigning for Obama but they were also interacting with each other, they were learning, they were growing.

The *importance of creating social interaction*²⁰ is echoed by David Brockman and Joshua Kalla, two leading academic researchers on grass roots campaign organizing.

"Convincing people that yours is a good cause is only part of building a movement. The best advocacy groups have people who feel connected not just to the issue, but to the network of activists who participate in it."

This idea has been around for years. Over a decade ago, Theda Skocpol *chronicled*²¹ the power of civic associations in the 19th-century US. They were not organized because people cared a lot about politics; they were organized around socializing or other issues that people already cared about. Effective movements find ways to create a social group," as *experimental research*²² from Hahrie Han, the author of the book, *How organizations develop activists*, has recently validated.

...the most successful movement-building organizations—think AARP and the NRA—engage in "functional organizing," providing tangible services and creating social communities.

¹⁸<http://prospect.org/article/getting-serious-about-2018>

¹⁹<http://talkingpointsmemo.com/cafe/can-the-democrats-get-organized>

²⁰<https://www.redstonestrategy.com/2015/02/17/mobilized-interview-david-broockman-josh-kalla-uc-berkeley/>

²¹<https://scholar.harvard.edu/thedaskocpol/publications/diminished-democracy-membership-management-american-civic-life>

²²https://www.amazon.com/How-Organizations-Develop-Activists-Associations/dp/0199336776/ref=tmm_pap_title_0?ie=UTF8&qid=1412647830&sr=8-1

This was actually what the old Democratic political machines provided. As Kevin Baker noted in an [article in the New Republic](#):²³

[The machine] provided immigrants with jobs, clothing, and the proverbial turkey for Christmas; got them their citizenship papers; bailed them out of jail; advanced them money for a wedding or a new child; sent them a doctor when they were sick; buried them respectably. Providing these services—and finding out in the first place what their constituents needed—required copious man power, with still more hands required to canvass the vote, stand on street corners and bloviate, and physically haul the faithful to the polls to vote “early and often”—as well as unethical tactics like strong-arm opponents, intimidate vote counters, and, if necessary, steal away entire ballot boxes and dump them in the river.

Politics under the machine was an urban festival, with picnics and chowders, boat rides, excursions to the country or the new amusement parks, balls and cotillions, block dances, and “beefsteaks,”²⁴ atavistic rituals in which men donned aprons and devoured endless amounts of buttered steak with their teeth and hands.

The machines were organized down to the block level—sometimes to the apartment-house level, with layer upon layer of committees and “ward heelers.” The organization had to do this: It needed your vote. Today, in an average, gerrymandered election district, congressional representatives are trotted out only at election time. That won’t win local or statewide races. Democrats must actively recruit, as the machines did, block by block, building by building.

Michael Dukakis recently told me “The only reason I got elected governor three times, and to the state assembly before that, was precinct-based, grassroots organizing. By which I mean a precinct captain, and six block captains, making personal contact on an ongoing basis with every single voting household in the precinct.”

...So how can Democrats get back in the game of practical politics? The trick is to take the best of what the machines gave us—the populism, the participation, the inclusion—while avoiding the old venality, racism, authoritarianism, and exploitation. This was never easy, and the task has been too long delayed:

The first step in creating the kind of permanent grass roots “machine” that Democratic candidates need during election years is building a highly skilled and dedicated door-to-door canvassing and voter contact operation. As Brockman and Kalla note:

By far the most effective way to turn out voters is with high-quality, face-to-face conversations that urge them to vote. How do we know? Nearly two decades of rigorous randomized experiments have proven it.

[Alan Gerber](#)²⁵ and [Don Green](#)²⁶, the authors of *Get Out The Vote* ran the first of these “field experiments” in 1998. The professors randomly assigned voters to receive different inducements to vote: some received postcards, some received phone calls, some received a visit from a canvasser, and some received nothing.

²³ <https://newrepublic.com/article/135686/soul-new-machine>

²⁴ http://gothamist.com/2012/12/11/the_beefsteak_dinner_craze_of_the_1.php

The experiment found that voters called on the phone or sent postcards were not noticeably more likely to vote than those sent nothing. But canvassing was different. Just one in-person conversation had a profound effect on a voter's likelihood to go to the polls, boosting turnout by a whopping 20 percent (or around 9 percentage points).

The nearly two decades since Gerber and Green's first experiment have consistently borne out their finding that personal conversations have special political potency. Hundreds of academics and campaigns have tested the impacts of various campaign tactics with randomized field trials. [High-quality canvassing operations emerge as consistent vote-winners.](#)²⁷ (See for example, Lisa Garcia Bedolla and Melissa Michelson's "*Mobilizing Inclusion: Transforming the electorate through get out the vote campaigns*") On the other hand, impersonal methods have consistently failed to produce cost-effective results, no matter how you slice the data or [which populations](#)²⁸ researchers examine.

But the conversations must be genuine and authentic:

To actually affect voters, research shows that having an actual conversation is crucial. Canvassing seems to work best when voters who don't care much about politics engage in a genuine conversation about why voting is important. So, when canvassers rush through scripted interactions, just trying to cram their message into voters' minds, the impacts they leave are minimal—voters might as well have been sitting through a television ad. On the other hand, research has consistently found that authentic interpersonal exchanges [usually have sizable impacts.](#)²⁹

But facilitating that breed of genuine personal outreach isn't what many "field" campaigns actually do. Green has seen this in practice. He has found that many canvassing operations have effects smaller than what we obtained from our initial study or in our follow-up experiments with seasoned groups such as ACORN³⁰. But, Green went on to say, "[When I'd inquire about the details of these sub-par canvassing efforts, I would often discover that the scripts were awkward or that there was limited attention to training and supervision.](#)"³¹

An alternative approach, called "deep canvassing," has become increasingly popular with grass roots organizing efforts and deserves to be examined and considered of use by any campaign that seeks to build a solid network of local supporters. A summary of the approach can be found in the following document "[Deep Canvassing Primer.](#)"³²

What are the practical implications for potential Democratic candidates?

To start with, candidates should carefully consider one of the most important lessons of the trade union movement—that the first organizing campaign almost always fails. The first union organiz-

²⁵<https://politicalscience.yale.edu/people/alan-gerber>

²⁶<https://polisci.columbia.edu/content/donald-p-green>

²⁷<https://www.brookings.edu/book/get-out-the-vote-second-edition/>

²⁸<https://yalebooks.yale.edu/book/9780300166781/mobilizing-inclusion>

²⁹<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2014-10-06/how-do-you-change-someones-mind-about-abortion-tell-them-you-had-one>

³⁰https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Association_of_Community_Organizations_for_Reform_Now

³¹<https://www.vox.com/2014/11/13/7214339/campaign-ground-game>

³²<http://truebluegrassroots.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/DeepCanvassingPrimer.pdf>

ing campaign's real job was to build the foundations for the second and the third campaigns; to find the best local leaders and organizers, to identify the most militant workers in the shop, to establish the local union hall as a community center. It is this kind of movement building for the long haul that sets the stage for victories later on.

Genuinely dedicated progressive candidates have this kind of long term, multi-year perspective. They know that winning the respect and trust of the voters in their district and building a reputation takes more than one election campaign. They visualize running for office as long term commitment, not a one-year experiment.

So think long term, not short term. Don't put all the campaign's resources into TV ads and last minute canvassing that leaves nothing behind the day after the election. A political campaign that does nothing at all to build long term Democratic infrastructure in a district is in a profound sense a failure, even if the candidate wins on election day. On the other hand, a campaign that helps to build solid and stable local Democratic organization is ultimately a success, even if the candidate doesn't win the first time around.

Recommendation 5

Progressive campaigns and candidates must be committed to learning from experience. Many different progressive and Democratic groups will be running candidates and engaging in extensive voter mobilization in 2018 and 2020. They will follow a range of strategies and offer a range of different kinds of appeals in white working class communities. Progressives and Democrats must be firmly dedicated to studying every one of these campaigns honestly and objectively, learning the lessons from their various successes and failures.

What do we really know about this issue?

For the last 50 years there has been a continuing debate between two alternative theories about the kind of campaign Democratic candidates should run in white working class districts.

The first theory holds that Democrats should run on a full-throated progressive-populist platform like Bernie Sanders' 2016 campaign—an approach that attributes relatively little importance of incorporating into campaigns recognition of the value white working people attach to many traditional cultural attitudes regarding religion, small business or the military or of the unique social perspectives that arise out of the distinct white working class experience.

The second theory holds that Democratic candidates should tailor their platforms to match the existing opinions of their white working class constituents. In the traditional “hired gun” professional campaign management approach, opinion poll firms would collect data on a wide range of issues and the consultants would then advise the candidate on how to stake out a “median” position on those issues, aimed at positioning himself or herself in the “center” of the competing candidates.

Given the vast number of campaigns that have been run in the last 40 or 50 years, it would seem that there should be far more than enough empirical data on the success or failure of these two approaches to determine which one is more effective.

But in fact, even today there is absolutely no agreement at all on this question. This is for a simple reason: *these two theories about the optimal political strategy are not empirically*

testable. They are instead deductions drawn from basic assumptions about how the human mind processes political issues.

The assumption underlying the first view is that economic issues are the “real issues” while social and cultural concerns are in some profound sense superficial or illusory. The view has its roots in the radical conception of “false consciousness” but was brought up to date in the 2000’s with the notion of “framing,” the idea that the dominant mass media can mislead working people with pre-packaged conservative ideological “frames” but that such indoctrination can be reversed by the assertion of equal and opposite progressive framing.

The underlying assumption behind the second view is essentially an advertising industry based model of the voter as a political “consumer” who “buys” a particular package of policy options when he or she chooses a candidate. As a result, it advises that candidates should be systematically “packaged” to appeal to voters, generally by adjusting their platforms and messaging for the widest possible appeal. In the early 2000’s this approach led to the view among many campaign consultants that Democrats should adopt “Republican-lite” positions on many issues in order to broaden their electoral appeal.

Neither of these two basic conceptions of how the human mind processes political information can ever be definitively and categorically proven true or false and the political strategies that flow from them can therefore continue to be upheld even in the face of a vast number of elections that do not seem to validate them. In any election there are always a wide range of factors that can be argued to have “distorted” the outcome that would have occurred under more “normal” circumstances—a bad candidate, a scandal, an inept campaign, a hostile media, a lack of funds and so on.

This kind of rationalization has gone on since 1968 when white workers first began to desert the Democrats. Nixon won white working class voters, it was said, not because the Democrats’ message was wrong but because Democrats were held responsible for the Vietnam War, Carter lost white workers because of inflation and the Iran hostage crisis, Ronald Reagan won white working class voters because of his Hollywood-trained charisma, George W. Bush won Red State voters because of his down to earth, amiable style and so on.

The 2016 campaign offers a particularly vivid example of this same process. Bernie Sanders supporters argue that he would have decisively won the votes of the vast majority of white workers if there had been more debates, or if he had had more time or money to present his views. Hillary supporters argue that she was the victim of the most intense and sustained campaign of smear and slander in American history regarding the phony Benghazi and e-mail scandals and that without that propaganda barrage she would have been far more popular among working Americans and certainly would have won the election.

Obviously neither of these arguments can be definitively proven to be true or false and as a result the proponents of both views can and do continue to believe in the ultimate correctness of their particular strategy. Significantly, however, while differing in many respects, both of these approaches have had a similar effect on Democratic political strategy.

Both approaches have tended to lead to a “one size fits all” view of campaign messaging and design. While progressive and moderate Democrats disagree on which political strategy to follow, they have generally concurred that there should indeed be only one uniform political strategy followed

in districts across the country rather than accepting that a progressive populist strategy might work best in one particular district and a more culturally traditional approach in another. In fact, very often the failure of some specific campaign has been blamed on the absence of a unified Democratic message across the country. It is not infrequent to hear the lament “if the Democratic Party would only unify around one clear message and platform the party could win a vast number of contests across the country.”

While Donald Trump had no formal political philosophy beyond a deeply rooted, visceral racism and an instinctive authoritarianism, he grasped the reality that white working class Americans had a distinct perspective that they felt was both dismissed and belittled by Democratic progressivism and cynically exploited by establishment Republicanism. As a result, he recognized the opportunity to present himself as the only real and “authentic” champion of white working people. Unlike previous racist candidates who ran on a purely racial platform, Trump fused his basic racism with a distinct appeal to a range of other grievances of working class Americans.

After the election Democrats quickly grasped the genuine and profound neo-fascist threat posed by Donald Trump and as a result an increasing number of both progressive populists and centrist or moderate liberals have embraced the need for adopting a more flexible, district by district approach to political strategy in white working class America.

Shortly before his death, Paul Booth, a former top official of the American Federation of State County and Municipal Workers and a respected figure in the progressive wing of the Democratic Party expressed this new perspective in the following way:

As it is not known which constituencies will be responsive to Democratic organizing and persuasion, and can't be known until it's attempted, Democrats are obliged to explore each and every opportunity....Their tactical strengths will be tested as they find and measure which potential voters respond to which messages, and reinforce whatever seems likely to pay off in the 2018 cycle, without cutting off efforts that have the potential to pay off over a longer time frame.

Similarly, in many of the new progressive organizing initiatives that have emerged since Trump's election there is an acceptance of the idea that different districts may require different kinds of candidates and that progressives should be flexible enough to accept the need for a range of strategies, messages and platforms in order to win victories in different districts across the nation.

The more flexible view is also visible in the moderate-centrist camp. While a handful of ageing representatives of the rigid, bitterly anti-left and anti-populist centrism of the early 2000's continue to publish occasional commentaries on the editorial pages of the New York Times, their influence is now barely discernible within the modern Democratic Party. In contrast, as the director of Democracy Now—a newer organization of centrist mayors and governors says:

“I don't know the one true path to durable progressive majorities, and I don't think anyone else does either. When you're in the minority, you need to expand in every direction. Different places lend themselves to different strategies. What works in New Hampshire may not work in Montana.”³³

³³<http://prospect.org/article/getting-serious-about-2018>

Ezra Klein elaborated on this particular organization's more flexible approach to strategy:

Some districts may need progressive populists; others may need culturally traditionalist incrementalists. Democracy Now's theory is to look to the candidates already winning in these areas and try to replicate what's made them successful, both by recruiting and supporting candidates like them and by distilling their learnings and lessons for others.³⁴

What are the practical implications for a potential Democratic candidate?

As the organizers of the 2017 White Working Class roundtable concluded:

Progressive campaigns and candidates must be committed to learning from experience. Many different progressive and Democratic groups will be running candidates and engaging in extensive voter mobilization in 2018 and 2020. They will follow a range of strategies and offer a range of different kinds of appeals in white working class communities. Progressives and Democrats must be firmly dedicated to studying every one of these campaigns honestly and objectively, learning the lessons from their various successes and failures.

Most important, while winning victories in 2018 will be vitally important for blocking Republican initiatives these contests will also provide an urgently needed laboratory for comparing a range of strategies and for refining lessons that can then be applied in 2020 and the years beyond. New Democratic candidates must recognize that the division between Democrats and the white working class has been developing for decades and will not be reversed in one congressional bi-election. The elections of 2018 will be the beginning, not the end, of a long and hard struggle to regain the trust and support of the non-racist sector of white working class America.

³⁴<https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2017/8/24/16189922/will-marshall-new-democracy-dlc-democrats-2018>