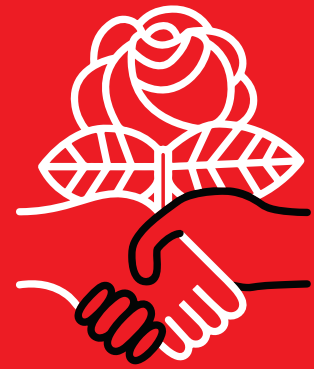


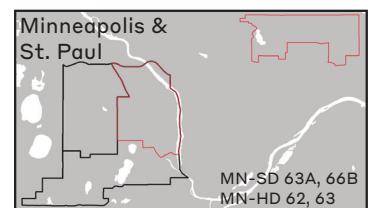
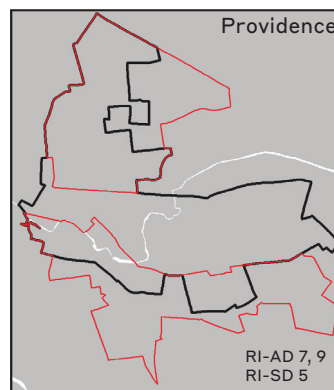
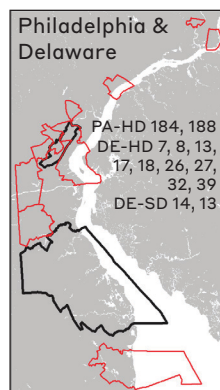
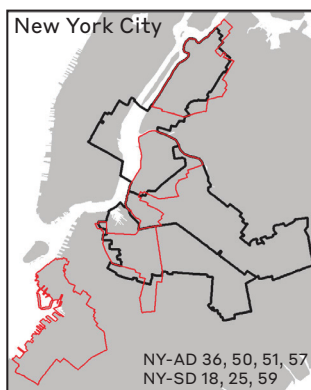
DEMOCRATIC LEFT

THE MAGAZINE OF THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISTS OF AMERICA
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Not Your Pundits' Red Wave

DSA AT THE BALLOT BOX



UPPER HOUSE | STATE LEGIS.

LOWER HOUSE | STATE LEGIS.

King Caucus: DSA-endorsed candidates are packing into state houses around the country. The maps above show select areas with clusters of wins by DSA endorsees.

BY SUZ WARSELL

A red wave did materialize on election night 2022, just not the one pundits expected. DSA-endorsed campaigns saw huge victories across the country—the protection of abortion rights in Kentucky and Montana, the increased tipped minimum wage in the District of Columbia, a sweep of DSA candidates in the Twin Cities, and more. You can find more complete results online, but here are a few lessons we learned:

DSA fights for abortion—and wins. Kentucky and Montana voters decisively defeated a ballot measure that would have stripped away the right to an abortion. In both cases, DSA chapters led the way on voter outreach, contacting more than two million

voters in Kentucky and sending nearly 300,000 texts in Montana.

Organized people beat organized money. In DC, Metro DC DSA led the fight in support of Initiative 82, which raises the tipped minimum wage for workers across the city. The measure won by almost a three-to-one margin, despite special interest opponents spending millions to defeat it.

Wins on ballot measures defending tenants in Pasadena and Portland further demonstrate the strength of our campaigns even when up against the most powerful interests.

Socialists win up and down the ballot, and across the country. DSA proved that socialist issues can win anywhere at any level, including the

elections of state senators, U.S. representatives, and presidents of city Board of Aldermen. Over 75% of DSA's endorsed candidates and ballot measures won.

DSA allows us to fight back together. Across the country, endorsed candidates and campaigns collaborated to share lessons learned. Chapter leaders from Kansas, Kentucky, and Montana met regularly to share strategies and hone their tactics. Being part of a national organization means shared lessons, shared momentum, and shared solidarity. 🌹

SUZ WARSELL is a member of DSA's National Electoral Committee and a volunteer with the DC Abortion Fund.

FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

AFTER A GOOD ELECTION, SEIZE THE CHANCE TO ORGANIZE



BY MARIA SVART

Not only did voters turn out against fascism in November, but they also passed a host of working-class initiatives and sent a clear message that so-called social issues such as abortion don't need to be counterposed to economic issues. In fact, social issues are economic issues, and we can win on both.

DSA expanded our electoral footprint this fall, winning 75% of our nationally endorsed candidates and issue campaigns. We now have 14 state caucuses of more than one elected official. We're building the bench and leadership experience of democratic socialists in office.

We need mass politics to lift up the working class at a mass scale. Some 37.7 million people will have their lives improved because of candidates and issue campaigns supported by DSA chapters in this election cycle, including initiatives to increase the minimum wage for tipped workers, protect renters, protect worker organizing, and protect abortion. Incredibly, 1.1 million people will benefit from initiatives actually written by DSA members.

We're building the skills and capacity of our chapters to not just write policy

but to develop campaign strategies, to fundraise, and to run canvasses, phonebanks, and text banks. And we're doing it everywhere—to protect abortion in red states, DSA chapters in Kansas, Kentucky, and Montana coordinated DSAers to send 5.4 million texts to voters in their states.

And we won't stop. And we won't stop. Outside funding for progressive organizing tends to taper off between elections, but one of the most critical—and unique—things about DSA is that membership dues, not big donors or some other funding stream, pay for our work. This independence allows us to set our own program.

We now face a far-right Republican Party in Congress, taking over school boards, and refusing to seat democratically elected state officials. The capitalist-owned media helps normalize the far Right, and the judiciary is packed with Republican judges. At the same time, neoliberal Democrats will continue promoting the policies that opened the door to Trumpism in the first place by driving down working-class living standards. Furthermore, reactionary super PACs spend millions against progressive Democrats in primaries and then switch parties and spend for the Republican opponent if their primary strategy failed to do the trick. At this political conjuncture, we must operate with a clear-eyed

view, which is why we have a nuanced strategy.

While we have one foot in the formal political system, we have the other in the streets. As I write this piece, 48,000 academic workers in the University of California system are striking for a fair contract, Starbucks workers across the country just held a one-day strike, and railway workers are considering a strike. DSA is there, as members and as supporters, because although there is power in the ballot box, there is also power in stopping production. We don't know what the future holds, but we'll be ready. Better yet, we'll help shape it. 🌹

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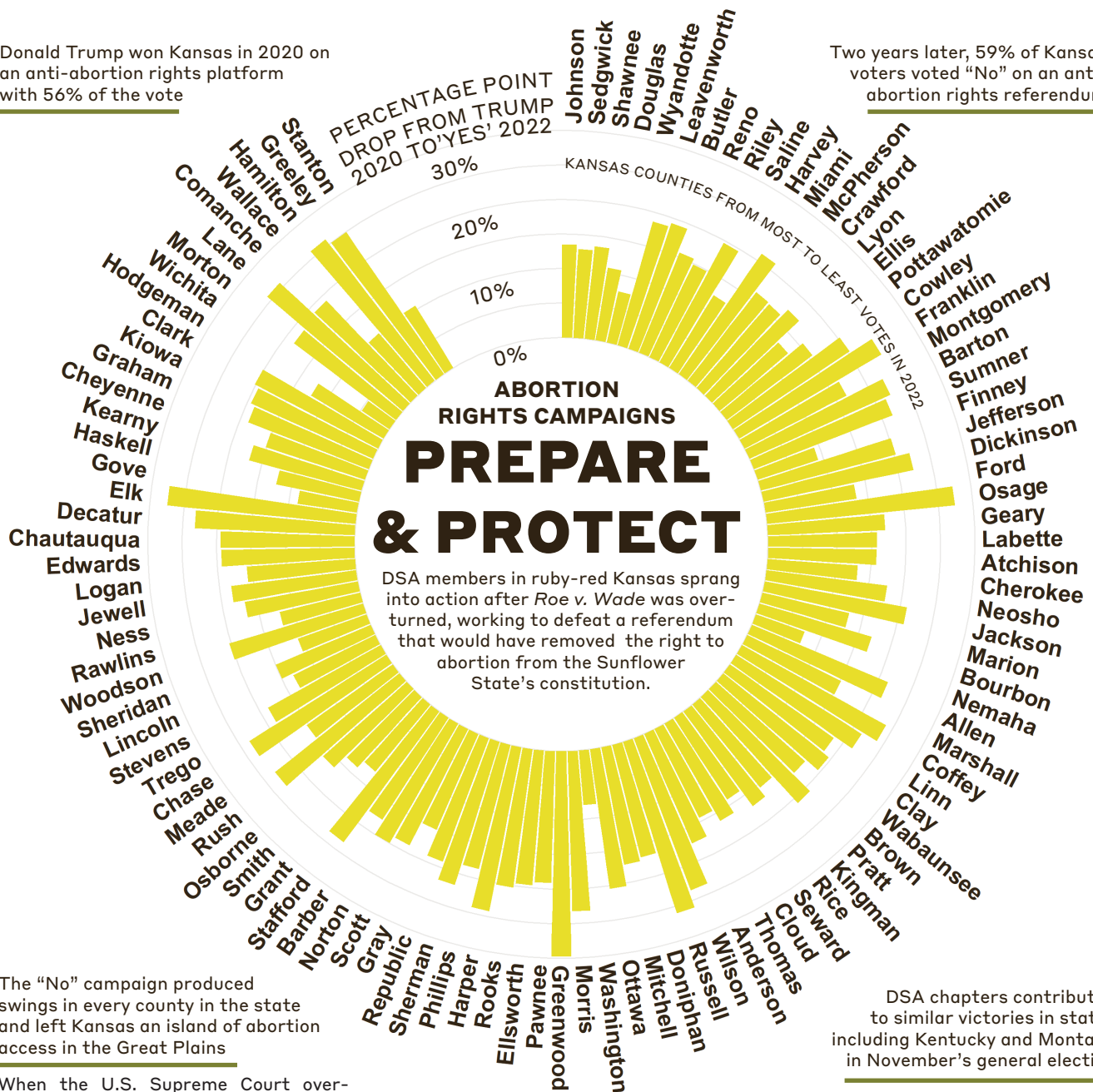
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Donald Trump won Kansas in 2020 on an anti-abortion rights platform with 56% of the vote

Two years later, 59% of Kansas voters voted "No" on an anti-abortion rights referendum



The "No" campaign produced swings in every county in the state and left Kansas an island of abortion access in the Great Plains

DSA chapters contributed to similar victories in states including Kentucky and Montana in November's general election

When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, which had affirmed a constitutional right to abortion, feminists across the country sprang into action. As did the right wing. Ever since the landmark decision in 1973, the Right has devoted resources to denying abortions to the poor and working class. Now, instead of just restricting access, it could deny abortions completely through state-by-state legislation.

An early battleground was in Kansas, where a ballot initiative would have amended the state constitution to remove the right to abortion. DSAers in Kansas weren't going to let that happen. The successful campaign against the amendment offers a model for other states. You can find out more details at bit.ly/KS-DSA and by reading what happened in other states in DL Online, but here are some takeaways from Kansas.

Prepare your campaign. Do the research, give good information, work with other groups, be respectful of the voters, tailor the message to the audience (including having local activists do the translations).

Protect the rights you have. In states where abortion is supported by a majority of voters, new initiatives are possible. If you don't live in one of those states, focus on maintaining or establishing a right to abortion. You can build on that base later.

Remember that every vote counts. In a statewide referendum, it doesn't matter whether a vote comes from a "red," "blue," or "purple" district. Figure out where your votes are and go after them.

Use DSA's national resources. Texting programs that allow you to reach thousands of voters with hard-hitting messages, Canva, and consulting with successful campaigns are all available options. Find out more at protectabortion.org.

Analyze afterward and don't stop. The Right hasn't stopped scheming since the day abortion became legal in the entire United States. We have to have that staying power. Figure out what went well, what you could do differently, and plan your next step.

Take help from other states. You'll need money, postcard writers, texters, and other volunteers. Reach out.

GRAPHIC BY ADAM KAISER.
DATA FROM KANSAS SECRETARY OF STATE

ORGANIZING FOR A MULTIRACIAL DSA

BY KEVIN RICHARDSON

How can DSA build an organization that reflects the multiracial working class in both its membership and leadership? More than 40 leaders from chapters across the country met in Minneapolis, Minnesota, this fall to build skills and explore this very question. This Organizing Institute was the first in-person event hosted by DSA's National Multiracial Organizing Committee (MROC).

At the institute, participants discussed the challenges of, and opportunities for, multiracial organizing in DSA. Participants attended trainings around recruitment, building a mass organization, and coalition

building. These trainings not only allowed participants space to discuss important issues around multiracial organizing but also to build skills.

We discussed the ways that members of color can sometimes be pushed

into leadership positions when they are not ready. Many feel tokenized in their chapters. Instead of pushing leaders of color into the spotlight too soon, we explored ways to develop their skills through mentoring, training, and support systems.



Following from this inaugural institute, our goal is to have an ongoing series of events and trainings, some in-person and some online, conducted by MROC committee members. 🌹

Kevin Richardson is a member of the National Political Committee and chair of DSA's National Multiracial Organizing Committee (MROC). For more information about MROC, please email mroc@dsacommittees.org.



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