

A graphic design featuring a solid blue background with several horizontal, wavy bands of a darker blue color. The bands are positioned in the lower half of the page, creating a sense of movement and depth. The text is overlaid on the left side of this graphic.

FANNIE LOU HAMER

**REPORT
CARDS**

SUMMARY

The electorate has changed dramatically over the last 40 years. People of color made up 46 percent of President Obama's voters in 2012 (calculated based on exit poll data). Unfortunately, Democratic campaigns have not consistently adapted their strategies to the realities of current demographics.

Democracy in Color was created to collect and share data on how the most highly resourced Democratic campaigns and committees engage people of color. Rooted in quantitative and qualitative analysis of campaign operations, it is an effort to engage interested progressives on how to invest their time and financial resources and hold major party campaigns accountable to engaging voters of color. The initiative is led by Steve Phillips, author of the New York Times bestseller *Brown Is the New White*, and Jessica Byrd serves as the campaign director. A team of political experts conducted the research and evaluation.

This first round of report cards is an intensive look at the Democratic Senate Campaign Committee (DSCC), the DSCC Independent Expenditure, and five of the most competitive Democratic U.S. Senate races including Nevada, Ohio, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Colorado. Democrats have a chance to take back a majority in the Senate in 2016. If we do not effectively engage the voters most likely to vote for Democrats, we could waste this opportunity.

Grades are based on the extent to which these campaign organizations engage voters of color as an integral part of campaign strategy in a meaningful and resourced way.

Our report cards have two goals:

1. To help campaigns and committees increase their chances of winning.
2. To fuel a broader dialogue about how Democratic campaigns and party committees engage and encourage participation of voters of color.

WHAT'S NEXT

The Fannie Lou Hamer Report Card rankings released on June 20th are not meant to be final. We will issue another report card before the election. Lagging campaigns can improve their standing. We will issue a final report on the 2016 cycle after Election Day.

Meaningfully engaging voters of color in the Democratic process is not just overdue, but is the winning strategy to secure a progressive future. This effort is meant to ensure investment in hiring culturally competent staff and consultants, including voters of color in central campaign strategy, and a heightened investment in the direct voter contact tools needed for engagement.

OVERVIEW OF REPORT CARD RESULTS

| | CAMPAIGN TO ELECT MICHAEL BENNETT (CO) | CAMPAIGN TO ELECT RUSS FEINGOLD (WI) | CAMPAIGN TO ELECT TED STRICKLAND (OH) | CAMPAIGN TO ELECT KATIE MCGINTY (PA) | CAMPAIGN TO ELECT CATHERINE CORTEZ MASTO (NV) |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| OVERALL STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES | ★☆☆☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★☆☆☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★★★ |
| DIRECT VOTER CONTACT | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★★★ |
| POLLING | ★★★☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ | | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★★★ |
| MEDIA | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★★★★ |
| BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE & SYNERGY | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ |
| STAFF & CONSULTANTS | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★★★ |
| CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★★★★ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ |
| APPROPRIATE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY TO STAKEHOLDERS | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★★★ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★★★★★ |
| CUMULATIVE GRADE | ★☆☆☆☆ 2.8 | ★☆☆☆☆ 2.9 | ★☆☆☆☆ 3.2 | ★☆☆☆☆ 3.3 | ★☆☆☆☆ 4.3 |

GRADING KEY (SEE APPENDIX FOR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED IN EACH CATEGORY)

REPORT CARD

Campaign to Elect Michael Bennet

Incumbent Democratic Senator Michael Bennet is running for reelection. His Republican challenger will be determined by the June 28th primary. This election is regarded as a high priority for Democrats because Bennet won his 2010 election by a narrow margin, and former Democratic Senator Mark Udall lost his election in 2014. Defending this seat is essential to retaking the Senate.

State Demographics At A Glance: In 2012, 35% of the Colorado voters who voted for Obama were people of color.¹

| | |
|--|-------|
| OVERALL STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES | ★☆☆☆☆ |
| DIRECT VOTER CONTACT | ★★☆☆☆ |
| POLLING | ★★★☆☆ |
| MEDIA | ★★★☆☆ |
| BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE & SYNERGY | ★★☆☆☆ |
| STAFF & CONSULTANTS | ★★★☆☆ |
| CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES | ★★☆☆☆ |
| APPROPRIATE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY TO STAKEHOLDERS | ★★★☆☆ |
| CUMULATIVE GRADE 2.8 | ★★★☆☆ |

COMMENTS

In our analysis, we could see some planning that factored in voters of color in polling and media. However, the Bennet campaign may be relying on the presidential campaign and resources for activities to turn out voters. We believe this is a mistake for any Senate campaign taking place in a state that is not in the top tier of swing states. Outside of that top tier, the Senate campaign resources and intellectual investment will be critical to engaging and motivating voters of color to participate. Even if the presidential campaign turns out voters of color, victory will depend on the voters also voting the entire Democratic ticket.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We hope the Bennet campaign directs significant resources to direct voter contact (through its own campaign or through the state coordinating committee), continues to expand its connections with community groups, and champions the issues that will motivate voters of color to come out and vote for Senator Bennet. We are looking forward to seeing how the plans for targeting, polling, and media firm up in the coming weeks.

GRADING KEY (SEE APPENDIX FOR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED)

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------|
| VERY GOOD | GOOD | OKAY | SOME EFFORT | POOR | NO EFFORT |
| ★★★★★ | ★★★★☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |

REPORT CARD

Campaign to Elect Russ Feingold

Former Senator Russ Feingold is running against incumbent Republican Senator Ron Johnson, who defeated Feingold in 2010. This race is seen as a top target for Democrats in order to gain a majority in the Senate.

State Demographics At A Glance: In 2012, 23% of the Wisconsin voters who voted for Obama were people of color.¹

| | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| OVERALL STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| DIRECT VOTER CONTACT | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |
| POLLING | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| MEDIA | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE & SYNERGY | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| STAFF & CONSULTANTS | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |
| CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES | ★ | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ |
| APPROPRIATE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY TO STAKEHOLDERS | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |
| CUMULATIVE GRADE 2.9 | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |

COMMENTS

Interestingly, although the Feingold campaign did not appear to give enough weight to the role of voters of color in some of its big picture strategy, in a number of specific areas they did have specific plans for voters of color. Compared to other campaigns, Feingold's is seen as being fairly strong in being a champion for community issues and in collaborating with community groups in ways that make a difference for them. Campaign staff is racially diverse, which will enable them to have a more culturally competent campaign strategy. However, we did not get a sense that campaign consultants are bringing strong cultural competence to the table, and consultants play a pivotal role in building and guiding campaign strategy. The Feingold campaign does not appear to be conducting polling in ways that will help it understand and reach voters of color.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

While only 9% of currently registered Wisconsin voters are people of color, these voters comprised 23% of the 2012 Obama voters. We hope the Feingold campaign will fully factor this group into its strategy. Polling information about specific groups of color can help the campaign in this endeavor.

GRADING KEY (SEE APPENDIX FOR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED)

| VERY GOOD | GOOD | OKAY | SOME EFFORT | POOR | NO EFFORT |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------|
| ★★★★★ | ★★★★☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |

REPORT CARD

Campaign to Elect Ted Strickland

Former Governor Ted Strickland is running against incumbent Republican Senator Rob Portman. This race is considered a tossup that will help determine which party has a majority in the Senate.

State Demographics At a Glance: In 2012, 37% of the Ohio voters who voted for Obama were people of color.¹

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|--|-------|
| OVERALL STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES | ★☆☆☆☆ |
| POLLING | ★★☆☆☆ |
| MEDIA | ★★★☆☆ |
| BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE & SYNERGY | ★★★☆☆ |
| STAFF & CONSULTANTS | ★★★☆☆ |
| CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES | ★★☆☆☆ |
| APPROPRIATE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY TO STAKEHOLDERS | ★★★★☆ |
| CUMULATIVE GRADE 3.2 | ★★★☆☆ |

COMMENTS

Barack Obama won Ohio in 2012 with 41% of the white vote and 96% of the Black vote. Strickland faced an African American opponent when he won the governorship in 2006 and managed to win 58% of the white vote in that election, an unusually high percentage of white voters for a Democrat. In his reelection bid, his share of the white vote fell to 38%. The Strickland campaign has been largely focused on trying to win back the white voters they lost in 2010. We believe this is a mistake. In a presidential year, the key to winning in Ohio is increasing turnout of voters of color. While the presidential campaign will invest in voters of color in Ohio, those voters may not feel sufficient motivation to participate, and even if they vote for president, they may not vote for Senator without more connection to this campaign. The stands that Governor Strickland takes can make a difference in their participation.

The Strickland campaign is paying attention to how to build synergy with down-ballot campaigns and is specifically coordinating with campaigns of African American candidates. The campaign staff are racially diverse, which will enable them to have a more culturally competent campaign strategy. However, we did not get a sense that campaign consultants are bringing strong cultural competence to the table, and consultants play a pivotal role in building and guiding campaign strategy.

The Strickland campaign is looking to the presidential campaign to invest in direct voter contact for voter mobilization. We thought this was reasonable for Ohio and eliminated "direct voter contact" as a category for this report card.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

It is not too late for the Strickland campaign to adjust its overall strategy to better factor in engaging and inspiring voters of color.

GRADING KEY (SEE APPENDIX FOR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED)

| VERY GOOD | GOOD | OKAY | SOME EFFORT | POOR | NO EFFORT |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------|
| ★★★★★ | ★★★★☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |

¹ Calculation based on data from the 2012 National Election Pool exit poll.

REPORT CARD

Campaign to Elect Katie McGinty

Katie McGinty is running against incumbent Republican Senator Pat Toomey. This race is seen as a top target for Democrats in order to gain a majority in the Senate.

State Demographics At A Glance: In 2012, 38% of the Pennsylvania voters who voted for Obama were people of color.¹

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|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| OVERALL STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |
| DIRECT VOTER CONTACT | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |
| POLLING | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |
| MEDIA | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE & SYNERGY | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| STAFF & CONSULTANTS | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |
| CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| APPROPRIATE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY TO STAKEHOLDERS | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ | ☆ |
| CUMULATIVE GRADE 3.3 | ★ | ★ | ★ | ☆ | ☆ |

COMMENTS

The Pennsylvania primary was on April 26th, and the McGinty campaign is in the process of pivoting toward the general election. Accordingly, our ratings are based on a smaller amount of information. In a number of areas, the McGinty campaign was taking steps to reach African American voters, which comprise 23% of the Democratic-leaning eligible voters in the state. The campaign staff are racially diverse, which will enable them to have a more culturally competent campaign strategy. However, we did not get a sense that campaign consultants are bringing strong cultural competence to the table, and consultants play a pivotal role in building and guiding campaign strategy. The McGinty campaign appeared to have more knowledge of and relationships with community groups in communities of color than is typical.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We hope the McGinty campaign champions more of the issues that communities of color care about and will motivate them to participate. We hope that as their plans develop, they build out strategies for reaching the full range of Democratic-leaning voters of color in Pennsylvania.

GRADING KEY (SEE APPENDIX FOR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED)

| | | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------|
| VERY GOOD | GOOD | OKAY | SOME EFFORT | POOR | NO EFFORT |
| ★★★★★ | ★★★★☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |

¹ Calculation based on data from the 2012 National Election Pool exit poll.

REPORT CARD

Campaign to Elect Catherine Cortez-Masto

Former State Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto is running to serve as the next United States Senator to replace US Senate Democratic Leader, Harry Reid. Because this is an open seat, it is important to make sure that it continues to be held by a Democrat.

State Demographics At a Glance: In 2012, 49% of the Nevada voters who voted for Obama were people of color.¹

| | |
|--|-----------|
| OVERALL STRATEGIES & PRIORITIES | ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ |
| DIRECT VOTER CONTACT | ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ |
| POLLING | ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ |
| MEDIA | ★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆ |
| BUILDING INFRASTRUCTURE & SYNERGY | ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ |
| STAFF & CONSULTANTS | ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ |
| CHAMPION FOR COMMUNITY ISSUES | ★ ★ ☆ ☆ ☆ |
| APPROPRIATE TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY TO STAKEHOLDERS | ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ |
| CUMULATIVE GRADE 4.3 | ★ ★ ★ ★ ☆ |

COMMENTS

The Cortez Masto campaign is mounting a strong effort within many of the activities important for reaching voters of color. The campaign is working in a highly integrated way with the Nevada state coordinating committee. Because their effort appears so unified, we factored in some of the activities and resources from the state coordinating committee into the ratings.

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We hope the Cortez Masto campaign reaches out to more community groups in communities of color and becomes a champion for the issues that these communities care about and will motivate them to participate.

GRADING KEY (SEE APPENDIX FOR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED IN EACH CATEGORY)

| VERY GOOD | GOOD | OKAY | SOME EFFORT | POOR | NO EFFORT |
|-----------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------|
| ★★★★★ | ★★★★☆ | ★★★☆☆ | ★★☆☆☆ | ★☆☆☆☆ | ☆☆☆☆☆ |

REPORT CARD

Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee

Background: What Is the Role of the DSCC?

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) raises funds to help Democrats win Senate races around the country. As a Democratic committee, they can work directly with Democratic Senate campaigns. The DSCC report card focuses on the key, high-leverage roles that the DSCC can play in making sure that we maximize the potential of voters of color to help Democratic Senate candidates win. This current report card hones in on what the DSCC is doing right now related to engaging voters of color.

State Demographics At A Glance: In 2012, 46% of the people who voted for Obama were people of color.¹ Seven of the Republican-held seats up this year are in states won by Obama in 2012.



LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

We hope the DSCC uses the full power of its ability to allocate large amounts of resources to maximum effect in making sure that Democratic-leaning voters of color turn out and vote for Senators. By the time of our next report card, all of the Senate campaigns should have received their modeling data from the DSCC. We hope that data helps campaigns maximize their ability to target voters of color who will vote for their candidates.

COMMENTS

The DSCC has an opportunity to play a critical role in affecting how many resources get allocated to which voters. If it chose to, the DSCC could push for the smartest strategies to turn out Democratic-leaning voters of color and make sure that the optimum amount of the resources it raises get allocated to these strategies. Instead of pursuing a proactive strategy along these lines, the DSCC is in a more responsive mode—they may decide to allocate resources toward turning out voters of color in races where the stars align for that to work well (e.g., where the state coordinating committee is prioritizing Senate races and reaching voters of color), but will go in another direction if the context is not so receptive to this use of resources. This is a dangerous course of action as the reason Democrats lost control of the Senate in 2014 is that millions of voters of color did not come out and vote. Taking proactive and proven steps to improve voter turnout is critical to success in Senate campaigns.

In calculating our rating for consultants, we considered the consultants that the DSCC directly hired who helped shape strategy for Senate campaigns, although this is a relatively small portion of DSCC funds.

GRADING KEY (SEE APPENDIX FOR DESCRIPTION OF WHAT WAS CONSIDERED)



FACTORS CONSIDERED IN THE DSCC REPORT CARD

The activities that are included in this current report card are:

STAFFING

The cultural competence and knowledge of specific racial groups of the DSCC staff shapes their thinking on many aspects of strategy and execution. Our team gathered information about the racial backgrounds of the DSCC's staff.

CONSULTANTS

Sometimes the DSCC uses its resources to directly engage consultants to do work for specific Senate campaigns. Our team gathered information about the racial mix and cultural competence of the DSCC's consultants.

RESOURCE ALLOCATION

Because the DSCC plays such a central role in fundraising, it has a decision-making role in some key resource allocation decisions for the campaigns it invests in. One of the most important decisions it makes is the relative balance of investing resources in "ground game"—direct outreach to voters and investing resources in paid media. We believe that campaigns have historically overinvested in paid media, which targets frequent voters, who are more likely to be white and more likely to need to be persuaded to vote for a Democrat.

Campaigns have historically underinvested in the ground game, which is a method of turning out voters who are more likely to vote Democrat, but may not vote at all. These voters are also more likely to be people of color. Given the composition of the electorate in many states, sufficiently investing in the ground game is a critical element to winning. The DSCC has an opportunity to bring a smarter, more effective balance to resource allocation in key states. Our team examined evidence related to how they are doing in this area.

Here are some high-leverage activities that are not happening right now, and so are not included:

RECRUITMENT

The phase of candidate recruitment is completed, and so is not included in this report card (although we may include it in our final report card for the 2016 cycle).

MODELING AND TARGETING

Another high-leverage activity the DSCC engages in is targeting for the Senate campaigns. It provides modeling data that each campaign uses to help determine which voters to focus on. This modeling data is in the final completion stage. We plan to include it in our next report card. We very much hope the modeling provides data that helps the Senate campaigns maximize their potential to include voters of color in their strategies and to reach them effectively.



REPORT CARD

DEMOCRATIC SENATORIAL CAMPAIGN COMMITTEE

INDEPENDENT EXPENDITURE



In addition to its other activities, the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee (DSCC) raises funds for an independent expenditure effort, which carries out its own independent activities on behalf of Democratic Senate candidates. Roughly 30% of the funds that the DSCC raises goes toward this effort. As an independent expenditure effort, these activities are not coordinated with the overall DSCC strategy or with the individual Democratic Senate campaigns. They are handled by separate staff.

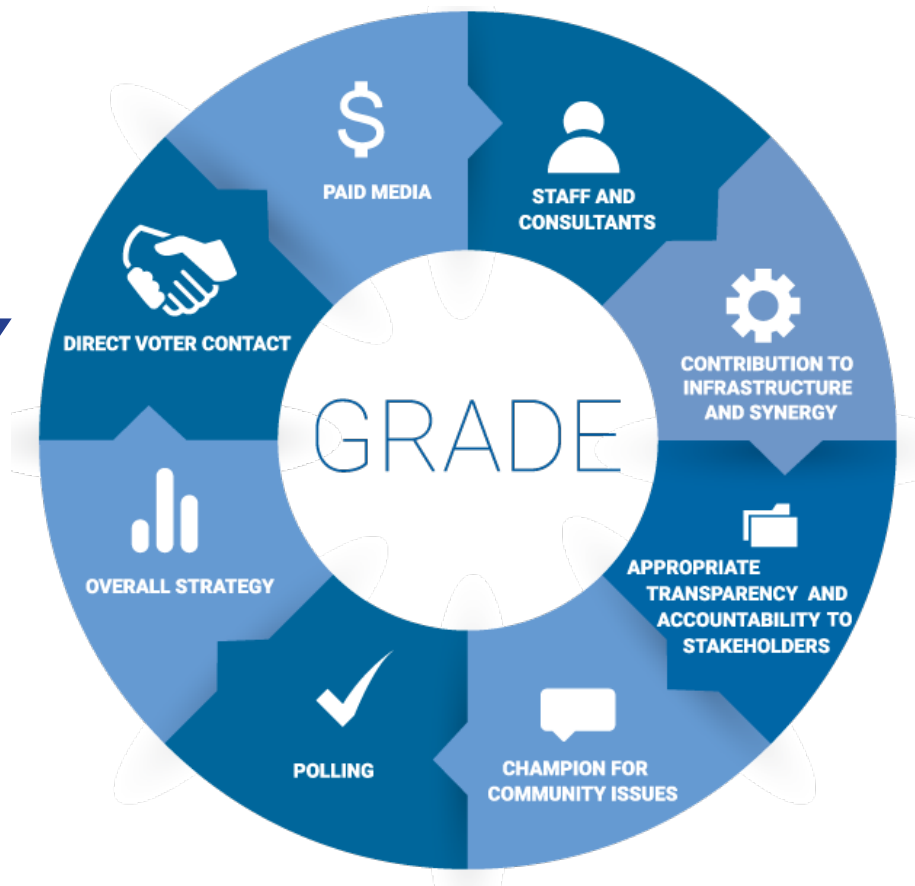
The DSCC independent expenditure effort is currently designed to focus on media. Given that the rest of the DSCC is not spearheading an overall effort to get the balance right between media and efforts that are directed to increasing turnout, we question whether such a significant portion of funds going to the DSCC should automatically go to advertising that focuses on persuadable voters. We question if the independent expenditure's best value is an exclusive focus on media and whether there is data-driven evidence that that is an effective use of funds. There needs to be an honest conversation about what the right allocation should be toward television ads, as well as the compensation structures for consultants who oversee these ads.

We were not able to provide a comprehensive report card on the DSCC independent expenditure because staff leading this work would not respond to phone calls and emails. (We can confidently say they would get zero stars for "Appropriate Transparency and Accountability to Stakeholders" if we had been able to produce a report card.)

We would like to know which voters the independent expenditure effort is prioritizing, both within each state campaign and also which states it is prioritizing and what kind of priority is accorded to states with larger numbers of people of color.

There is some publicly available information about the activities of the DSCC independent expenditure. So far in 2016, this effort spent \$1,797,025 to support the election of Katie McGinty (as of the last Federal Elections Commission report). The funds were distributed to a media company that does not have a reputation for cultural competence. Based on this limited information, we can either infer that reaching voters of color was not a main priority of the expenditure, or if it was, that there was little attention paid to the importance of cultural competence in reaching them.

APPENDIX: **METHODOLOGY USED IN THE REPORT CARDS ON SENATE CAMPAIGNS**



Since campaigns operate in a competitive context, there should be mechanisms that allow campaigns to share information while minimizing the risk that a competitor will gain access to sensitive information. Accordingly, our report cards disclose overall rating without revealing such information. Here, we describe the kinds of factors that we consider in developing our ratings for each report card component.

State Context

Before examining a Senate campaign's strategy and activities, our team of analysts first studied the state context for the Senate race:

- Each state has different proportions of each racial group.
- Each racial group has a different probability of voting for the Democratic candidate.
- If a Senate campaign is taking place in a battleground state, we analyzed the likely impact of the presidential election on the dynamics of the race.

When rating a Senate campaign's performance in a particular category, we benchmarked that performance against a model of optimum performance with each racial group in the state in question. In other words, the benchmarks are different for each state—a state in which 90 percent of the population is white has very different benchmarks from a more racially diverse state.

Overall Strategy

This component of the report card focuses on the two most important strategic decisions that a campaign makes: 1) which voters it targets in order to win; and 2) how it allocates the budget. In terms of the budget, the team specifically focused on how much of the resource pie goes to each group of voters. In some states, the Senate campaign budget might also be one of the most significant sources of funds for the "ground game," or direct outreach to voters. In these states, we examined how much of the budget is going to this critical area.

Direct Voter Contact (Ground Game)

Direct voter contact, also known as “field” or the “ground game,” involves directly communicating with voters through calling them on the phone or speaking with them in person. These strategies are particularly important for turning out voters who do not vote regularly. Our team assessed whether campaigns are engaging in the most effective practices in this area and know how to execute this approach well with different racial groups.

Polling

Polling is used to guide many campaign decisions. Our team examined whether the campaign’s polling is designed to provide accurate information about each racial group that could play an important role in the election’s outcome.

Paid Media

Campaigns use many forms of media, including television, radio, digital media, and direct mail. Our team examined whether the campaign’s media strategy is designed to effectively reach each racial group that could play an important role in the election’s outcome.

Champion for Community Issues

For voters who do not regularly vote, a critical factor in deciding whether to vote in a particular election is whether there is a candidate who seems committed to making a difference on the issues that most affect their lives. These voters would need to see both that these issues are part of the candidate’s policy platform and also that the candidate seems committed to championing these issues.

It is not enough for the candidate to merely list these policies on the website. They must also talk about them to signal to these voters that they are important priorities.

Campaigns will make their own determinations about messaging, but it is important to note that in the current media environment, people of color are listening to mainstream messages and will notice whether or not the issues important to them are mentioned as part of the general campaign talking points.

To develop a grade for championing community issues, the team turned to civic engagement groups in the state. These organizations are seeking to turn out people of color who do not regularly vote and could tell us whether the potential voters they were speaking with were motivated by the candidate’s stance on issues that matter to them.

Contribution to Infrastructure and Synergy

Senate campaigns have an opportunity to contribute to the success of down-ballot races and the long-term success of Democrats in the state. Our team examined whether the campaign was coordinating with other efforts in a way that built synergy and contributed to long-term infrastructure.

Staff and Consultants

Campaigns are more effective when their staff and consultants represent and are knowledgeable about the racial groups the campaign needs to reach. This means that staff and consultants must have cultural competence in reaching specific communities. Of course, while people who are not from a particular racial group may have cultural competence in reaching that group, it is also helpful to have staff and consultants who are from key racial groups who also have cultural competency. Our team gathered information about the racial mix and cultural competence of the campaign’s staff and consultants.

Appropriate Transparency and Accountability to Stakeholders

People contribute their resources and time to campaigns because they very much want the candidate to win. They deserve to have information about the campaign that can help them form an opinion as to whether the strategy is sound. Our team rated the campaign on its willingness to communicate key aspects of its strategy.

As noted above, we understand that campaigns and committees must balance transparency with protecting sensitive information from competitors. Accordingly, our report cards disclose overall ratings without revealing sensitive information.