

To: NOW National Board

From: Linda Berg, Political Director, and Bonnie Grabenhofer, Vice President

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Political Report

One Year until Election Day

In 2016, NOW PAC's work will complement and support the crucial work that the Ms. President NOW project is undertaking to bring us the election of the first woman president. Without a supportive Congress, however, Hillary will have her hands tied on so many vital issues. So, it is particularly crucial that we take back the Senate majority which, among other responsibilities, will confirm nominees to the Supreme Court. And although it will be more difficult to achieve Democratic majority in the House and restore Pelosi to the Speakers' Chair, we must continue to elect more strong feminists to stand up to and counter the insanity of the Tea Party and right-wing Republicans.

The electoral field is beginning to gel. Since our resources are limited, the PAC has always looked for opportunities to maximize the impact of its work through feminist targeting. We look for overlapping priorities – a Senate race with a strong feminist candidate that just happens to be in a battleground state. Or even better, a strong feminist candidate in an open or challenger house seat, in a state with an important Senate race, located in a battleground state. In situations like that every voter that we inspire to get to the polls will help elect every feminist up and down the ballot.

Before the PAC can narrow its focus, we must first identify states and races where our impact could be significant. Over the coming months, some candidates will falter and others will become so successful that our efforts could be better spent elsewhere. But from the lens of one year out, it is clear that some races and candidates must draw our attention.

On the presidential map there are eleven states which arguably are battleground or swing states: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin. As time passes and the candidate field narrows, this list may shrink or expand. There are no Senate races in Iowa, Michigan or Virginia. Some of the remaining battleground states, however, already offer interesting Senate races where feminist issues and candidates are at stake. In other states, primary races will determine the Senate candidate and therefore whether we have a feminist candidate to target. For example, in Florida, NOW PAC has endorsed a terrific feminist candidate, Pam Keith, for the toss up seat, but at this point she is trailing significantly in the polls.

Another interesting Senate race in a battleground state is in Nevada, where Catherine Cortez Masio is running for Harry Reid's open toss-up seat. New Hampshire, a state with a crucial early primary, will be in the national eye because Governor Maggie Hassan is challenging Senator Kelly Ayotte. This a race where two women – one feminist and one not – will battle for what could be an important pick-up seat for the Democrats. In North Carolina, progressive candidate Deborah Ross is in a primary to challenge

Senator Richard Burr who is considered to be vulnerable; and in Wisconsin former Senator Russ Feingold is waging a strong challenge to Senator Ron Johnson to retake his former seat. It is exciting that all these battleground Senate races can potentially be won by feminist candidates.

We also cannot lose focus on states which are not currently considered to be battleground states but which offer important Senate opportunities such as in Illinois where Representative Tammy Duckworth is challenging Senator Mark Kirk in a toss-up seat. There are contested primaries in Maryland and Pennsylvania between strong feminist candidates. NOW PAC was an early supporter of Kamala Harris, who is running to fill the open Barbara Boxer seat in California, a state that is rich with electoral votes.

Our grass roots effort to activate NOW members to work for the election of Hillary Clinton, Ms. President NOW, is being powered by a volunteer army of NOW activists. We are encouraging all NOW members, regardless of their home state, to volunteer for that effort. As shown in the Ms. President NOW board report, there are many ways to get involved, from phone banking to women voters in battleground states to traveling to crucial primary states and attending rallies and canvassing events.

Clinton's campaign is well aware of our grassroots volunteer efforts to get out the women's rights votes. However in politics you also need money. We know that many NOW members have been also donating to the Clinton campaign directly. NOW PAC has set up an ActBlue page in which you can donate directly to the Clinton campaign and NOW will get the credit for inspiring your donation. If you or friends in your network are planning to support the campaign financially, please consider doing that through our ActBlue page. You will be helping elect the first woman president and telling the campaign that they should credit NOW for the contribution. The link to our ActBlue page is below. Feel free to circulate it to your membership. With just one email, Florida NOW members raised almost \$3000.00 for Hillary's campaign.

<https://secure.actblue.com/contribute/page/mspresidentnow>

Help us identify and endorse feminist congressional candidates

The NOW PAC endorsement process is underway with some endorsements made in 6 states so far in addition to Hillary Clinton for President. NOW PAC tries to identify endorsable feminist candidates, but sometimes we do not hear of great candidates, especially for House seats. We look to state organizations for endorsement recommendations. NOW leadership can use the materials in the NOW Leaders page of the NOW website to facilitate screening candidates to ensure they support all of NOW's issues. Particularly helpful is "PAC Candidate Interview Guidelines" – general guidelines with suggested questions for candidate interviews. Also available is a NOW PAC webinar entitled "Working with NOW PAC: Endorsements & Elections." PowerPoint slides as well as a YouTube recording of the webinar are available. If you have any questions about the process, or need assistance with screening questions please contact Linda Berg at elections@now.org.