

To: NOW National Board

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

Date: September 7, 2016

POLITICAL REPORT

Conference Report

The 2016 NOW Conference was very successful for the PAC. Not only did the workshops draw large numbers of conference attendees and receive rave reviews, but the silent auction and fund raising during plenaries brought in much needed funds for election projects.

The Political Big Picture

Now that Labor Day has passed, the true election season has started in earnest. If you live in one of the eleven swing states: Colorado, Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Nevada, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin you will be inundated with mailings, phone calls and television ads. If there is a contested Senate race in your state, and particularly if the state is also a battleground state, prepare for a double onslaught of campaign messages. This is an election unlike anything anyone has ever experienced in this country. One candidate has thrown out the rulebook and pundits are openly puzzled as to what is truly happening. You will be reading conflicting poll results and the talking heads will continue to chatter. There will be times of elation and despair. NOW PAC can only stick to the fundamentals and those clearly show that if Clinton runs a good campaign and gets out her voters, we should finally have a feminist woman president of the United States. Getting out her voters is where NOW and NOW PAC will play a crucial role.

By the time of the Board meeting, NOW PAC will have endorsed more than 120 federal candidates. For the **House of Representatives** some of these candidates are incumbents whose re-election is more or less guaranteed. Some of these candidates are brave feminists running in solidly Republican districts. They will raise our issues and their profiles. Then there are many strong candidates running tough races but winnable races who may be raised by the tide of a Clinton victory and elected in places quite unexpected. Those candidates will need strong grassroots help to push them over the finish line. Odds are still against the Democrats taking back the House, but it is not entirely impossible. We do expect significant gains and these newly elected feminists will be needed reinforcements for our beleaguered friends fighting the extreme right in the House.

Democrats need to take back 5 seats and retain Harry Reid's **Nevada** seat in order to regain control of the **Senate**. The Senate seats most likely to flip which have feminist NOW PAC endorsed candidates are: **Illinois** where **Tammy Duckworth** is challenging Mark Kirk; **Wisconsin** where **Russ Feingold** is trying to take back the Senate seat he lost 6 years ago; **New Hampshire**, where **Governor Maggie Hassan** is challenging Senator Kelly Ayotte; **Pennsylvania**, where **Katie McGinty** is challenging Senator Pat Toomey; **North Carolina** where **Debra Ross** is challenging Senator Richard Burr; **Arizona**, where Rep. **Ann Kirkpatrick** is challenging John McCain; and **Missouri**, where Missouri Secretary of State **Jason Kander** is challenging Roy Blunt.

NOW PAC Targeting and State Grants

Our goals are, as usual, larger than our resources. The PAC has decided that it is absolutely crucial to elect Hillary and take back the Senate. Therefore states that are both battleground states and also have feminist Senate candidates are our first targets, followed by states that have either a winnable Senate seat or is a vital battleground state.

There is currently a PAC direct mail fundraising piece out and a follow-up scheduled for mid-September. We plan to use the profit from those mailings plus the money we raised at the conference to award grants to targeted States where there is strong NOW leadership for GOTV activities. In those states where our leadership is not strong or able to coordinate a project, we hope to make contributions to our endorsed federal candidates whose election can change the balance of power in the Congress.

Because we not only want to achieve our electoral goals, but also want to help strengthen NOW state organizations we have currently asked targeted states to make grant proposals in which they outline their envisioned projects to get out the women's rights vote. We have learned from longtime experience that exciting political projects at the grassroots level also attracts new members and activists. Those proposals are due shortly, and we will allocate our funds and hopefully give our NOW state organizations the resources they need to effectively mobilize their volunteers and voters. These projects will work with and be complementary to the Ms President NOW projects. Grant proposals and their implementation will be coordinated through the Political Department.