

Political Report

To: NOW National Board Members

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

Date: February 25, 2017

Since the last board meeting the political world has been upended by the catastrophic election of Donald Trump to the Presidency. However, despite the devastation, there were some real victories to celebrate.

How NOW PAC endorsed federal candidates fared

The PAC endorsed **153 federal candidates** in the 2016 cycle. **93 endorsed feminist candidates won their general election.** We look forward to working with these newly elected members of Congress as we fight to protect our rights.

NOW PAC endorsed 5 of the newly elected Senators.

Catherine Cortez Masto (NV): Masto is the first woman to represent Nevada in the Senate and the first Latina to serve in the Senate.

Tammy Duckworth (IL): Duckworth is the first Thai American to serve in the Senate and the first Asian American woman elected to Congress. She was the first combat disabled veteran to serve in Congress and will be the first to do so in the Senate.

Kamala Harris (CA): Harris is of Jamaican and East Indian heritage and will be the first African-American woman to serve in the Senate since Carol Moseley Braun, making her just the second African-American woman Senator.

Maggie Hassan (NH): Hassan was the second woman elected to be governor after Jeanne Shaheen with whom she will now serve in the Senate.

Chris Van Hollen (MD): Van Hollen is a Former Montgomery County NOW (MD) member and NOW PAC endorsed member of Congress who will now serve as the 2018 Chair of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

Newly elected NOW PAC House endorsed members

Val Demings: FL-10. Demings was the first woman Chief of the Orlando Police Department

Stephanie Murphy: FL-07. Murphy is the first Vietnamese-American woman elected to Congress

Jamie Raskin: MD-08. Law professor

Brad Schneider: IL-10. Former member of the House

Carol Shea Porter: NH-01. Former member of the House regained her seat. In her first election in 2006, Porter was the first woman elected to Congress from New Hampshire.

Dwight Evans: PA-02. Defeated incumbent Chaka Fattah in the 2016 primary election and won a special election on Nov. 8 following Fattah's resignation from Congress. He will have the top seniority of his class.

Pramila Jayapal: WA-07. Jayapal will be the first Indian-American woman to serve in Congress.

State Grants

In addition to supporting individual candidates, and the nationwide Ms President NOW project, NOW PAC offered small grants to states with critical electoral importance to aid them in getting out the women's vote.

Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania NOW used their grant to send a newsletter to Pennsylvania NOW members to describe the urgency of the vote. In addition, they sent monthly email news to their members. Using their grant money the Pennsylvania NOW Times was mailed to 2,503 NOW members in Pennsylvania 2 weeks before the election. They also emailed the newsletter to 2,000 NOW members who had supplied their emails through membership renewals. One page of the Pennsylvania NOW Times was devoted to full color photos of Hillary Clinton and the 5 NOW PAC endorsed Congressional candidates as well as photos of the 15 PA NOW PAC endorsed and supported state legislative candidates plus a list of the 9 Philadelphia NOW PAC endorsed candidates. Elizabeth Parziale, VP of PA NOW, expressed her gratitude for the assistance and stated that it enabled chapters in Pennsylvania to work on making real change in the state.

Virginia

Virginia NOW repeated its successful postcard program mailing to 2,500 members – a beautiful full-color large postcard with one side featuring Hillary Clinton and the other featuring the two congressional endorsed candidates.

Florida

Florida NOW sent more than 10,000 full color postcards which compared and contrasted Trump and Clinton on issues of important to women. Highlighted issues include Abortion rights, expanding the ACA, economic equality, prioritizing green energy, women's health, equality in the workplace, LGBTQ rights, and immigration.

Florida NOW also used their grant to pay travel expenses for NOW members to come to the state to work to get out the vote for women's rights.

North Carolina

North Carolina printed and mailed 5000 PAC endorsement cards. They also called members around the state and to encourage them to use the cards and go vote. During these calls, they also encouraged at-large members to get involved with chapters, with Ms President NOW-NC events, and with ERA events.

The political climate in North Carolina was "a nightmare mess with bad laws (including a 72 hour waiting period now and HB 2) and terrible politicians (Phil Berger, Paul Stam (aka the Prince of Pelvic Politics), Governor McCrory who is a complete embarrassment)" (Gailya Paliga)

The endorsement card included NOW PAC and NC NOW PAC endorsements. NOW PAC endorsements included Presidential Candidate Hillary Clinton, US Senate Candidate Deborah Ross, and Congresswoman Alma Adams. The measure of success was to count "thank you" for the endorsement card, new members at meetings, and reinstatements. Although they are still gathering statistics the project appears to have been a great success.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin NOW produced 6" x 11" postcards to send to their membership. On one side they compared and contrasted Hillary Clinton's positions on women's issues with Donald Trump's and on the other side they contrasted Russ Feingold and Ron Johnson's positions on the same issues. Rather than summarize the project, below is Wisconsin NOW's summation of the value of the project by Jean Beschta.

"The grant opportunity and encouragement to action was an exciting opportunity for WINOW to recharge its batteries and shake off some dust. A concrete opportunity to assist in the election of feminist candidates had an immediate as well as lasting impact.

The choice to create a giant postcard was made by the officers of the organization. We chose to dedicate the Postcard to Hillary Clinton and to Russ Feingold.

Taking the postcard from idea to reality was another amazing experience. Creating the dialog points on each of the candidates was an exercise in collaboration for our leadership team and others interested in the project. It gave us an impetus to reevaluate and recommit ourselves to the very core of our feminist values. Much of this work was completed by phone and e-mail.

We did come together in person at a mid-state point to address, stamp and sort the postcards. It was a joyous gathering of many hands making faster completing. We stayed to eat together and forge closer bonds between us. Clearly a sense of pride and accomplishment emitted from the group.

Other ideas sprouted from the energy and excitement. A more comprehensive e-mail list was created. These individuals were invited to follow WINOW on our Facebook page. Since this time, our followers have spread from 350 to over a thousand. We are amazed and pleased. Madison NOW began reinvigorating itself with new energy and commitment. Fox Cities/Green Bay NOW has a renewed energy and sense of purpose.

The election of Donald Trump was immensely shocking and profoundly saddening to our chapters. However, an sense of anger was added to our determination to continue to work toward our feminist values.

We sincerely appreciate the opportunity given to us by our National NOW office and are grateful for its impact.