

To: NOW National Board

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

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Political Report

2017 Elections

After the devastating 2016 elections, we actually have some excellent news to report for this year. NOW PAC has endorsed in 2 open congressional races, and we have already won one of them. Jimmy Gomez has been elected to represent California's 34th district to replace Xavier Becerra who became California's Attorney General. Like the rest of the country we are anxiously awaiting the results in GA-6 (June 20) where NOW PAC endorsed Jon Ossoff who is running against Karen Handel. Ossoff is a feminist, documentary filmmaker and former congressional aide while Handel is notorious for orchestrating the policy of the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure which cut ties with Planned Parenthood. After Komen lost 22% of its funding, Handel resigned from Planned Parenthood and Komen reversed that decision.

The off-year elections in Virginia are famous for being considered a bellwether for subsequent federal elections. And Virginia has sent a strong message to the Republicans that voters are rejecting the Trump message and are committed to women's rights. VA NOW PAC endorsed Lt. Gov. Ralph Northam solidly defeated former Representative Tom Perriello and will face Republican political operative Ed Gillespie in the general. Northam was a feminist hero for his strong leadership in fighting anti-abortion measures in Virginia, while Perriello when in Congress voted for the Stupak amendment. Ironically the press is painting Perriello's loss as a loss for progressives because Bernie Sanders and Keith Ellison stumped for him, without any recognition that he was definitely the inferior candidate on reproductive justice issues.

We are also thrilled to report that Virginia NOW activist and Prince William NOW President Hala Ayala won her very contested primary for the House of Delegates. All in all 41 women won their primaries out of the 100 House seats which is as close to parity as we have seen in ages. However we recognize that some of these 41 candidates will have rough generals. All in all it was a great election day for women's rights supporters in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

NOW PAC Strategic Planning Meeting

The NOW PAC met in Miami Florida on April 22-23 to start charting political action over the next few years to result in positive political change for women. The PAC is deeply concerned about the loss of political power at the state level which has enabled gerrymandering and redistricting to the detriment of progressive candidates. As a result, the PAC believes that it is important to rebuild NOW in all 50 states

and to encourage our members to focus on state legislative and gubernatorial elections to elect feminists to office to protect our rights and stand up against Republican gerrymandering.

The Conference

In order to reach our political goals, the PAC has planned two crucial and fascinating workshops. The first will be "Taking Back Political Power at the State Level." This workshop will be two pronged. First NOW political experts Dr. Janet Canterbury and Robin Davis will analyze issues relating to challenging the right wing power in the states. And second, demonstrating the real world challenges facing us, we will hear from former GA NOW VP Renitta Shannon who was elected to the Georgia State Legislature and who is, by most accounts, the most progressive member of the legislature.

The second workshop "From Activism to Elective Office: How to Take your Community Leadership to the Next Level" will focus on everything you need to run for office and how to encourage other feminists to throw their hats into the ring. NOW PAC member and Connecticut political organizer Jacqueline Kozin will moderate a lively discussion between NOW activist candidates including Hala Ayala who just won her contested primary for a seat in the Virginia legislature, former NOW VP Lois Reckitt who was recently elected to the Maine State House, and former Florida NOW intern, Kentucky State Representative Kelly Flood.

The PAC invites all conference attendees to leave the voting room and join us in a PAC Party and celebration. We will raise vital funds for our electoral work while having fun. There will be a cash bar, silent auction and a carnival complete with games and activities. We hope that all can get together after the internal election is over and enjoy ourselves while awaiting the ballot counting.