

Beyond the ballot

An independent socialist campaign case study

By Bob Murrell, December 2025

[Introduction and Acknowledgements](#)

[Glossary of terms](#)

[Historical introduction](#)

[Elections in New Orleans](#)

[New Orleans DSA](#)

[2021 City Council campaign](#)

[Electoral Strategy 2022-2025](#)

[2025 City Council race](#)

[DSA City Council slate](#)

[Political introduction](#)

[Political choices for DSA electoral campaigns](#)

[What kind of campaign](#)

[What kind of candidate](#)

[Campaign relation to DSA](#)

[Other ways to run socialist electoral campaigns](#)

[New Orleans DSA electoral strategy](#)

[Political questions](#)

[Hypothesis](#)

[Critique of conventional electoral math](#)

[Win number hypotheses](#)

[Multi-objective optimization](#)

[A Marxist hypothesis](#)

[Strategies and Tactics](#)

[Who to target & how](#)

[What to say & how](#)

[Who to pay for it & how](#)

[Getting them into DSA](#)

[Campaign Structure](#)

[Architecture and resources](#)

[Organizing structure](#)

[Execution of campaign](#)

[Qualifying phase](#)

[Persuasion phase](#)

[GOTV phase](#)

[Results](#)

[Electoral results](#)

[Fundraising results](#)

[Recruitment results](#)

[Conclusions](#)

[Increasing Political Awareness](#)

[Find Where We're Popular](#)

[Recruit People to DSA](#)

[Political conclusions](#)

[Takeaways](#)

[Appendix](#)

[Conventional electoral mathematical concepts](#)

[Multi-objective optimization](#)

[Voter Score computation](#)

[Footnotes](#)

Introduction and Acknowledgements

Hello, I'm Bob Murrell. I wrote this case study as an opportunity for shared learning on electoral campaigning within the United States as an independent socialist candidate, as well as an additional source for the discussion of socialist participation in elections within the imperial core.

While I may not have identified as a socialist until the mid 2010's, my path towards being a socialist candidate started very early. I was raised Catholic and found the tenants of the gospel in contradiction with the politics espoused by the parishioners of my church. When I was kid I remember asking my dad about money and why he worked hard but didn't have enough money to buy something he wanted like a new car, and after my incessant "why" and "what if" questions my dad in frustration said "that's communism" and the conversation ended. My mom was the first person who got me interested in elections when I helped her make handmade bumper stickers saying "David Duke Makes Me Puke." Realizing that a grand wizard of the Klan was not only running for office but getting thousands of votes from the district I lived in was a stark reminder that racism is well and alive with people who claimed to be Christians, and that morality did not equate to ethics or material power.

Hurricane Katrina was a particularly radicalizing moment for me - I was in ROTC at Tulane and knew what the military was fully capable of doing to move ordinances across the world but didn't lift a finger for people who needed the bare essentials. When Tulane closed the Engineering School, I became even more radicalized against non-profit institutions like Tulane and how they further exploitation in New Orleans. After transferring to a school in Missouri, I started exploring outside of the identity I was raised in and began to read about Islam, stoicism, and anti-racism. My readings on anti-racism, anti-imperialism and abolition eventually led me to scholars like Dr.

Angela Davis and Kwame Ture, which were some of my more introductory readings on anti-capitalism and socialism.

In early 2019 I was hired by a small software company, and during a yearly interview, we went through an exercise to identify personal goals. The question of “if I could change anything in my community what would it be?” was answered with “eliminate childhood poverty”, which is pretty lofty for even myself. On the questionnaire, my boss asked “how would you accomplish this?” and while my mind went to “win the lottery” or “start a meal program”, my boss suggested that I could run for office. I’ve heard people throughout my life suggest I run for office but never from an employer.

I looked at how electoral campaigns are run and began to notice some basic project management concepts as well as a more traditional paradigm of a rigid plan and execution rather than being scientific or agile. I don’t undertake projects without some sort of discovery and planning, and this gave me the opportunity to grow my skills in project management, practice managing a large project, and more importantly, run a time-bound effort to introduce change to a big system. In many ways, my experiences in campaigning have been experiences in project management, and allowed me to manage the campaign in a way that gave tighter cohesion between strategy, tactics, messaging, and fundraising to execute our plan in a way that was also agile.

This has been a journey that has taken over five years to accomplish, and I’m grateful for the thousands of people along the way who supported these efforts, who participated, and the people who were willing to listen and interact with my campaigns. I want to thank my wife and family, as well as the hundreds of contributors and volunteers along the way. Special acknowledgements to Zach Bishof for his visualizations of campaign data, as well as so many other volunteers like Joel, Pushpa, Stephanie, Elmo, and Philip whose hard work is reflected in the data.

It’s not enough to understand electoralism, the point is to change it.

Glossary of terms

BobVar - The difference between Bob Murrell’s vote share in a precinct in the 2021 election and the district-wide average. Used to measure over/under-performance relative to his baseline.

Caucus - A formation within DSA, usually around political tendency or factional alignment, that can exist as national or local formations.

Coordinated Campaign - A legal method of campaigning under ethics laws in which a non-profit 501(c)(4) does not directly spend money but provides volunteer labor, social media promotion, and other in-kind support to a political campaign.

DSA - Democratic Socialists of America, the largest socialist organization in the United States.

Electoralism - The practice of running for office to win in electoral politics as a primary strategy for social change.

Field Plan - The operational plan for voter contact, including canvassing and literature drops.

GOTV (Get Out The Vote) - The final phase of a campaign focused on mobilizing identified supporters to go vote.

Independent Expenditure Campaign - A legal method of campaigning under ethics laws in which a non-profit 501(c)(4) can raise and spend its own funds on materials, ads, and outreach separate from the candidate's official campaign but in support of a political campaign.

Jungle Primary - An election system used in Louisiana where all candidates appear on the same ballot regardless of party, and the top two advance to a runoff if no one wins a majority.

Lit Drop - Short for "literature drop," the act of leaving campaign materials at a door without making direct contact, such as a door hanger.

Local Council (LC) - The elected leadership body of the New Orleans DSA chapter that acts as the board of directors for the local chapter.

MIGS (Members In Good Standing) - DSA members whose dues are current.

Multi-Objective Optimization - An area of mathematical study surrounding decision making with more than one objective that can be mathematically optimized towards more than one objective at the same time.

NEC (National Electoral Commission, formerly National Electoral Committee) - The DSA national body responsible for electoral strategy and recommendations on national endorsements.

NPC (National Political Committee) - The elected national leadership body of DSA that acts as the board of directors for national DSA.

OPDEC (Orleans Parish Democratic Executive Committee) - The local governing body of the Democratic Party in New Orleans. PDECs exist for all parishes and are also called DPECs.

Positive ID - A voter who has been identified as a supporter (somewhat likely or very likely) during canvassing or outreach.

Precinct - The smallest electoral division within a district that varies in size based on Louisiana law.

Prog% - The average percentage of votes received by leftist candidates/ballot measures in a given precinct across multiple elections from 2022-2024, used as a baseline for gauging potential leftist voter support.

ProgVar - The difference between the aggregate leftist candidate performance (Prog%) in a given precinct and the district-wide average.

Qualifying Period - Three days during which candidates must present a number of registered voters' signatures or pay a fee to appear on the ballot.

Runoff - A second election between the top two candidates if no one wins a majority in the first round.

SC - Steering committee, usually elected members of a body that acts as leadership. LC and NPC are steering committees.

STV (Single Transferable Vote) - A ranked-choice voting system used in some DSA internal elections.

Turf - A geographic area assigned to volunteers for canvassing or lit dropping with specific addresses to visit.

Universe (Voter Universe) - The set of voters a campaign aims to contact whose size is often calculated as a multiple of the win number.

Voter Score - A numerical rating assigned to individual voters based on factors like past voting behavior, demographic data, and progressive affiliation, and is used for targeting.

Win Number - The estimated number of votes needed to win an election, typically calculated as half the expected turnout plus one.

Historical introduction

Elections in New Orleans

New Orleans, Louisiana is its own unique political ecosystem as much as it is unique in culture and cuisine. In spite of Democrats holding a majority in registered voters and near-unanimous control of all elected offices in municipal and state legislative levels, the political spectrum of local candidates and their backers can vary from social democrats and progressives to DINOs and people who switch between Republican/Democrat/Independent, but rarely are there any

vocal reactionary or MAGA candidates. Our DSA chapter's voter guides¹ cover this on occasion depending on their participation in elections.

There is a consortium of bourgeoisie donor networks that at one point used to be organized into more formal bodies (BOLD, COUP, etc) that contested for elected offices, but now mostly act as advisors and fundraisers for the candidates they elevate for elections. Very rarely do these groups or campaigns do canvassing. In fact, some don't bother to knock doors at all, opting instead for sign waiving at major intersections, attending as many events as possible, and a significant amount of ads and mailers sent, oftentimes multiple large pieces of mail for households. The decline of these organized bodies can be chalked up to a number of issues but coincided with the arrest of Karen Carter Peterson, chair of the state Democratic Party and member of the local Carter family. The access to national Democratic Party resources flowed down through this consolidated power, and her conviction for theft of party funds to pay gambling debts had a reverberating effect, with Cedric Richmond gaining firm control over national resources and access passing through ally Congressman Troy Carter. This power vacuum was felt statewide as well as locally. While statewide Dems moved more conservative, the local scene gravitated towards old and new money dynamics, and local power brokers like Ike Spears and Leslie Jacobs began to compete more with Sidney Torres and other major Republican donors, thrusting their influences and donors to run campaigns for a variety of local offices including school board, state legislature, City Council, and mayor.

Lost in the swarms of money was an upswell in grassroots organizing, particularly around criminal justice reforms and labor organizing. These c3 and c4 organizations provided candidate scorecards and made endorsements, with varied success, as competitive alternatives to the organized capitalist groups. This includes but isn't limited to Flip the Bench coalition, PAC for Justice, Step Up for Action, Voters Organized to Educate, Power Coalition, EFNO, HousingNOLA, and more mentioned later.

The voting electorate itself is not monolithic. Some election cycles will have extremely low turnouts where an organized campaign like Gabriela Biro's can overcome power and fundraising disparities to win an election. Some cycles are dominated by an excess in mailers and paid advertisements that turn out low-information voters around a single issue like the possibility of a white mayor or increased property taxes. Corporate media like the Times Picayune/Gambit/Nola.com and news stations like FOX8 and WDSU are able to shape narratives of races with specific topics and questions asked during candidate forums that are then fed to hundreds of thousands of residents. Social media is hyperlocal in New Orleans, and the recent use of influencers and in-kind unpaid content blurs the lines of organic interest in candidates and manufactured consent.

It's worth noting that Louisiana utilizes jungle primaries for elections, with a primary election open to candidates of all party affiliation, and a runoff between the top two if one candidate doesn't reach a majority. This was reformed recently, and partisan primaries are being

¹ New Orleans DSA Voter Guides. <https://wordpress.dsaneuorleans.org/voter-guides/>

introduced for the 2026 federal races and statewide bodies like the state board for education and public service commission.

After the redistricting efforts in 2024, there was confusion² on which election the maps would take effect for the 2025 municipal races. As a result, three precincts on the eastern side of District A were redistricted, so at times you may see some precincts appear on a map or table that don't appear at other times.

New Orleans DSA

The New Orleans DSA chapter formed in 2017 with a variety of members with electoral experience, including former Senate candidate Kaitlin Marone. In 2019, the chapter endorsed local member Margee Green for state forestry and agriculture as a Democrat, where she finished second and had the most votes in Louisiana for an open socialist since Eugene Debs. In 2020, the chapter signed on as a coalition partner for the Save Your NOLA Libraries (SYNL) campaign to defeat a ballot measure that would defund public libraries, then a subsequent ballot measure that fully renewed the funding. The bad renewal was successfully thwarted, and the full renewal passed.

I had volunteered on a few campaigns for local Democrat Tammy Savoie from 2018-2019 and felt limited with my political development and my participation in these types of campaigns. I joined DSA in March 2020 at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. I volunteered on the SYNL campaign and attended strategy meetings, where I met a number of people in other organizations. I also worked with the DSA chapter's Municipal Action Committee on a series of power mapping and research exercises for each of the City Council districts (though I believe I was the only one to publish their findings³). I also contributed to the voter guides as a researcher and writer.

2021 City Council campaign

August 2020 was when I first explored running for office, and reached out to the local chapter's electoral committee on how to move forward. One member suggested District A since we just power mapped the district and presented an opportunity to run an insurgency campaign against the incumbent. I officially announced my candidacy in January 2021, but the local DSA endorsement process required sending a questionnaire to qualified candidates on the ballot (in July), so even though I collected enough signatures for my endorsement⁴ it wasn't even heard

² Aliana Mediratta, Verite News. <https://veritenews.org/2025/09/16/redistricting-new-orleans-city-council/>

³ New Orleans DSA.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Ghy1WGUD5qpdzXh0zG5bu5o196RYE3_HuQpuskkUgel/edit?tab=t.0

⁴ New Orleans DSA.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/11ujdaqfS6nuFgKv9mC5faVbJ4y6EpPBUoOy4X4UDFOQ/edit?usp=drivesdk>

for approval until the November 1st Local Council⁵ before the November election. The endorsement process at the time required Local Council approval, which they did not give due to capacity issues and the short turnaround time before election, so the chapter's General Membership did not have an opportunity to vote to endorse.

My 2021 campaign was an insurgency campaign against a well funded and well supported incumbent. I wanted to push him left on issues and to see how much support there was for leftist candidates in areas that have been abandoned by Black electoral groups and liberal causes. I did some rudimentary research on how precincts within the district voted for the incumbent Joe Giarrusso and candidates like Bernie Sanders and Margee Green that appeared on ballots in the precincts within District A. I found the Bayou St. John neighborhood had the most support for leftists. Historical Black neighborhoods were inconsistent - Hollygrove didn't turn out much at all while Leonidas turned out not far behind Lakeview. I found that it's difficult to overcome Lakeview and Audubon as a single voting bloc (mostly when white vs Black candidates, Dem v Rep). Navarre was amenable but also still conservative, and Mid City had potential in some areas. As such, my data showed that I would be unable to secure a victory against the incumbent Joe Giarrusso due to his unified political base in Lakeview and Audubon and significant fundraising in between cycles to sway low-info voters (his grandfather Joe Giarrusso Sr. was chief of police and on City Council).

⁵ New Orleans DSA.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/10fghZFIZDh4QLR_SuZ_OHKQOhuiU5OoB5fl1UEVN5Jg/edit?tab=t.0

Precinct	Neighborhood	BernieLiz %	Joe % Votes	Diff	Margee %	Diff	Giarrusso
Total		33.24%	64.28%	-0.31	46.58%	-17.70%	9615
03 14	Mid City	44.74%	50.46%	-0.06	69.70%	19.24%	55
03 18	Mid City	33.12%	41.98%	-0.09	67.06%	25.08%	89
03 19	Mid City	43.79%	39.32%	0.04	73.06%	33.74%	81
03 20	Mid City	33.33%	50.88%	-0.18	66.92%	16.05%	58
04 07	Mid City	43.10%	43.43%	0.00	67.01%	23.58%	43
04 08	Mid City	34.31%	56.97%	-0.23	60.54%	3.57%	94
04 09	Navarre	42.74%	73.48%	-0.31	44.71%	-28.77%	291
04 11	Navarre	22.58%	76.67%	-0.54	41.23%	-35.43%	138
04 14	Lakeview	18.28%	84.77%	-0.66	23.47%	-61.30%	384
04 15	Lakeview	24.29%	79.29%	-0.55	32.66%	-46.63%	245
04 17	Lakeview	28.30%	82.61%	-0.54	19.42%	-63.19%	247
04 17A	Lakeview	19.35%	90.91%	-0.72	17.18%	-73.73%	190
04 18	Lakeview	15.38%	87.09%	-0.72	18.48%	-68.61%	290
04 20	Lakeview	25.00%	88.48%	-0.63	18.62%	-69.85%	215
04 21	Lakeview	6.90%	83.73%	-0.77	22.66%	-61.07%	175
05 08	Bayou St John	33.33%	33.93%	-0.01	73.11%	39.18%	19
05 09	Bayou St John	41.38%	39.56%	0.02	84.55%	44.99%	36
05 10	Bayou St John	38.03%	43.55%	-0.06	81.75%	38.20%	54
05 11	Bayou St John	60.66%	47.83%	0.13	74.65%	26.82%	66
05 12	City Park	36.36%	47.72%	-0.11	71.29%	23.58%	94
05 13	Cty Park	38.75%	63.38%	-0.25	56.25%	-7.13%	135
05 15	City Park	25.23%	53.80%	-0.29	54.22%	0.42%	177
05 16	City Park	41.38%	58.39%	-0.17	55.17%	-3.22%	80
06 08	Bayou St John	42.11%	53.22%	-0.11	68.72%	15.50%	91
06 09	Bayou St John	22.22%	61.76%	-0.40	59.29%	-2.48%	147

Table of example leftist candidate 2021 precinct data.

Using voter preference data, along with housing and income data from the New Orleans Data Center, I targeted specific precincts that were less inclined for the incumbent (less white, less GOP, higher number of renters, higher amount of poverty). I ran on the Democrat ballot line, and while I was a member of DSA, I was instructed by members of the Local Council to not solicit interest from DSA members on the chapter Slack or list myself as a DSA member on my website to ensure no confusion around endorsement. I only received an endorsement from Run For Something and a handful of individuals (no elected officials). This was during the pandemic, and Hurricane Ida delayed the election a month.

I was a first time no name candidate, so expectations were low, and with \$11k raised, we received 16% for 2nd place out of 3. Neighborhoods that voted higher than average for me were Bayou St. John, Mid City, and Leonidas. Hollygrove, in spite of canvassing there heavily, did not

have high turnout and voted mostly for the incumbent. Tulane's homecoming was on election day and had very little turnout. All told, I finished with 2,770 votes. More important, I was able to push Giarrusso's rhetoric of tough on crime to focus more on the housing crisis, so much so he started referring to "commodified housing" around the doubles-to-dorms issue in later forums and was the swing vote to pass Right to Counsel for those facing evictions before election day.

Electoral Strategy 2022-2025

After the 2021 election, I met with other members of the electoral committee about what happened and what our electoral program looks like if we can't support DSA members running for office. I was elected a co-chair of the Municipal Action Committee and began to hold meetings around the electoral strategy of the chapter for the next few years. We collected information from the DSA National Electoral Committee, DSA National Convention resolutions, and our local chapter's resolutions surrounding electoral work. We drafted and approved an Electoral Strategy for 2022-2025⁶, and proposed it to the chapter. It was ultimately approved at a General Membership meeting, and outlined a number of goals for the chapter including reforming the endorsement process to remove Local Council approval, requiring membership for the candidate for endorsement, and to extend endorsement consideration before qualifying to allow for more time for the chapter to support the campaigns. It also aimed to endorse or recommend candidates for state legislature, school board, and City Council. At the next Local Convention, a bylaws amendment passed to reform⁷ the endorsement process to remove the LC veto and expand the timeline to allow before qualifying.

Our first foray into this new process was with State Representative Mandie Landry, who at one time registered No Party before switching back to Democratic Party shortly before her re-election campaign. This stemmed from her State Senate campaign against Royce Duplessis, where the state party, in spite of a dual endorsement, spent money on Royce's campaign and not Mandie's. As a result, she joined DSA and sought our endorsement. This happened similarly with Davante Lewis and Baton Rouge DSA for the Public Service Commission district seat. Mandie was challenged by an out-of-state newcomer with lots of money and support from the establishment state Democrats, state Democratic party chair Katie Bernhardt, and Congressman Troy Carter. The local unions, DSA, Step Up, and Voters Organized to Educate (VOTE) endorsed Mandie, all of which canvassed as either coordinated or independent expenditure. More coverage can be found in our voter guide⁸, and Mandie was re-elected soundly. Additionally, local member Lauren Jewett ran for the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education against a conservative Republican, and received the chapter

⁶ New Orleans DSA.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TAUXDslMcXBizlmFPJWPbC6qNhSL24FrYQJJgvyKMnY/edit?usp=drivesdk#heading=h.40y13ih2m9e7>

⁷ New Orleans DSA.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1BBeuUbJxRSZuA7hieC2qda1ndj8emNTsmCd12tMC_T0/edit?usp=drivesdk&tab=t.0

⁸ New Orleans DSA Voter Guide.

<https://projects.dsaneuorleans.org/voter-guide-fall-2023/house.php#District-91>

endorsement⁹. This was a much larger district spanning different parishes, and Lauren was defeated. There was limited canvassing and voter outreach done by DSA for the BESE campaign.

One discussion from our electoral strategy was running for seats within the local and state Democratic Party. This was not universally supported, and I had recommended its supporters introduce an amendment (along with some provided language) for what that strategy would look like and the goals to accomplish. When the electoral strategy was being voted on by the General Membership, no one introduced this amendment, so it was not included. As such in early 2024¹⁰ our chapter endorsed six members for the state party DSCC and recommended several others to the local party OPDEC and JPDEC. This was largely driven as an effort to begin organizing a statewide DSA body and to change state leadership under Katie Bernhardt who was in conflict with Mandie Landry and other progressives. Three of our 6 were elected to DSCC, along with two other DSA members statewide, and while the progressives' "reboot" wings did not achieve a majority, they were able to oust Katie Bernhardt who was not nominated. Unfortunately the new chair Randal Gaines has done largely nothing, trans party members have been misgendered and treated with disdain by party leadership, and the formation of a progressive caucus was rejected, leading to some members resigning or leaving the Democratic Party altogether. As of mid October, one of these prominent members joined DSA.

In the fall of 2024, chapter members Devin Davis ran for Congress and Gabriela Biro for school board. Both campaigns¹¹ were locally endorsed, and Devin sought the national endorsement as well. While the NEC denied Devin's recommendation, the NPC ultimately voted for national endorsement. Devin was unsuccessful against Congressman Troy Carter (of the aforementioned Carter family) who was an AIPAC funded incumbent. Gabriela was able to make a runoff against the local OPDEC endorsed candidate with ties to some of the older institutions mentioned previously. An interesting caveat of school board elections is the local AFL-CIO goes with whoever is endorsed by United Teachers New Orleans, the local Orleans Parish teachers union, so Gabriela was able to secure substantial union support with help from DSA UTNO members like Lauren Jewett on getting their endorsement. The unions, DSA, Step Up for Action, and VOTE all endorsed Gabriela and provided either coordinated support via volunteers or independent expenditures like ads and mailers. I personally canvassed with DSA for both candidates and spent an afternoon watching Gabriela's child while she was canvassing. Gabriela won the runoff election on very low turnout (10%).

2025 City Council race

Since the day after the 2021 election I've had people ask if I were running again, and I said probably but I didn't know for sure. We had another kid & I had to make sure it was even

⁹ New Orleans DSA Voter Guide.

<https://projects.dsaneuorleans.org/voter-guide-fall-2023/statewide.php#BESE-1>

¹⁰ New Orleans DSA Voter Guide. <https://projects.dsaneuorleans.org/voter-guide-spring-2024.pdf>

¹¹ New Orleans DSA Voter Guide.

<https://wordpress.dsaneuorleans.org/voter-guides/2024-fall-voter-guide/>

possible. In order to see if there was any change in the viability for a leftist candidate in District A I started to research election results from the time between 2021 and the spring 2024 elections and updated numbers. My methodology was to take the precinct-level results since the 2021 City Council race with ballot measures and races that featured candidates endorsed or recommended by DSA and Voters Organized to Educate (VOTE), as well as leftist candidates who appeared on the ballot in District A:

- 2022: Gary Chambers for Senate, Katie Darling for Congress LA-1, Davante Lewis for PSC, Mandie Landry for State Senate
 - Davante Lewis was endorsed by Baton Rouge DSA for the run-off
- 2023: Pearl Ricks for State House, Lauren Jewett for BESE, Leon Roche for Judge
 - Lauren Jewett was endorsed by New Orleans DSA
- 2024: Laurie Constantinou, Jack Sweeney, Brittain Forsyth for DSCC, Emily Ratner, Mauricio Sierra for OPDEC District A
 - Laurie, Jack, and Brittain were endorsed by New Orleans DSA
- 2024: Mel Manuel for Congress LA-1, Devin Davis for Congress LA-2, Housing Justice Fund ballot measure, Workers Bill of Rights ballot measure
 - Devin Davis was endorsed by New Orleans DSA

For each precinct (and in total), I took the election day vote count these leftist/socialist candidates received divided by the total votes in the precinct for that race to get an average vote percentage for leftist candidates. Note that not every precinct in District A voted for each of these races, as their boundaries oftentimes contained gerrymandered precincts (white conservative for CD-1 and BESE). Nevertheless, certain precincts could definitively be observed to have a more leftist preference while others had little or inconsistent preference. In total, these candidates received 208,642 votes out of a total of 386,095 (54.03%) in the aggregate, agnostic to election conditions, such as:

1. Is the election Democrats only (DSCC, OPDEC, State Senate)?
2. Is the election Dem vs Rep (Senate, CD-1, BESE)?
3. Is the election against centrist or establishment Democrats (CD-2, PSC)?
4. How many precincts did the election cover?
5. What was the turnout for the election?

This aggregate performance provided a bit of a baseline for leftist candidates (Prog%) on how the precinct has historically performed for leftist options. Certain precincts had much higher than the precinct average (54.03%), with the highest two in Bayou St. John (W05 P08 and W05 P09) at almost 69% and the lowest two in Audubon (W14 P09) and Lakeview (W04 P17A) at 26.67% each.

Neighborhood	Precincts	Prog	Total	Prog %
All	80	208624	386095	54.03%
<i>Early Voting</i>	<i>77</i>			
Mid City	6	7132	11927	59.80%
Hollygrove	7	4766	10872	43.84%
Bayou St John	5	4352	7515	57.91%
Fairgrounds	2	1931	3473	55.60%
City Park	4	4916	8669	56.71%
Leonidas	10	9942	18534	53.64%
East Carrollton	4	4135	8099	51.06%
Black Pearl	3	2365	4236	55.83%
Marlyville/Fontainebleau	4	4248	8175	51.96%
Tulane/Loyola	1	1278	1872	68.27%
West Riverside	4	3012	6244	48.24%
Audubon	13	8645	21583	40.05%
Navarre	2	2793	6089	45.87%
West End	2	1984	5149	38.53%
Lakeview	7	5506	16916	32.55%
Lakewood	3	1881	5666	33.20%

A table of Prog% accumulated over neighborhoods.

I wanted to find how the 2021 precinct-level performance compared to other leftist candidates since 2021. First, I calculated the variance of each precinct to the precinct-average value for my vote share in 2021 and the leftist candidate aggregates (BobVar and ProgVar). If a precinct's percentage was similarly more or less than the average, these two variances would trend similarly, whereas if the 2021 percentage did not correspond to the other leftist candidates, then these values would trend differently.

The patterns held for the white conservative neighborhoods Lakeview, Audubon, West End, and Lakewood as low performance. A number of precincts in Hollygrove and Leonidas in 2021 performed much better than leftist candidates in other races, particularly Pearl Ricks and Davante Lewis. Additionally, there were precincts in Mid City that performed better for leftist candidates than I did in 2021. This indicated to me that there was room for improvement in areas that weren't canvassed as much, while it may be wasteful to target precincts that don't turn out voters for leftists. All told, however, the turnout from low performing precincts is significantly higher than the turnout from precincts that prefer leftist candidates at a higher rate. Depending on the circumstances of who would run, it was possible for Lakeview and Audubon

to split their preferences, leaving a narrow lane to reach a runoff with enough support in the remaining precincts.

Group	Precinct	Neighborhood	Bob	BobVar	Prog%	ProgVal	VarDiff
	Total	77	16%		54.03%		
	Early Voting		12%		49.40%		
	Precinct Avg		20%		48.03%		
1	03 14	Mid City	29%	13%	61.56%	7.52%	5.17%
1	03 18	Mid City	40%	23%	55.95%	1.91%	21.20%
1	03 19	Mid City	39%	23%	57.76%	3.72%	18.91%
1	03 20	Mid City	35%	19%	60.14%	6.10%	12.66%
1	04 07	Mid City	30%	13%	64.91%	10.88%	2.52%
1	04 08	Mid City	33%	17%	62.69%	8.66%	8.02%
6	04 09	Navarre	17%	1%	45.09%	-8.94%	9.63%
6	04 11	Navarre	16%	-1%	47.36%	-6.67%	6.09%
6	04 14	Lakeview	7%	-9%	32.97%	-21.07%	12.02%
6	04 15	Lakeview	10%	-7%	39.72%	-14.32%	7.37%
6	04 17	Lakeview	7%	-10%	31.69%	-22.34%	12.49%
6	04 17A	Lakeview	2%	-14%	26.66%	-27.37%	13.23%
6	04 18	Lakeview	4%	-12%	30.64%	-23.39%	10.95%
6	04 20	Lakeview	2%	-14%	29.02%	-25.02%	10.61%
6	04 21	Lakeview	5%	-11%	33.18%	-20.86%	9.44%
2	05 09	Bayou St John	46%	30%	68.70%	14.67%	15.02%
2	05 10	Bayou St John	42%	26%	64.53%	10.49%	15.35%
2	05 11	Bayou St John	34%	17%	57.59%	3.55%	13.59%
2	05 12	City Park	29%	12%	62.79%	8.75%	3.43%
2	05 13	City Park	29%	13%	53.74%	-0.30%	13.12%
2	05 15	City Park	20%	3%	55.72%	1.68%	1.35%
2	05 16	City Park	26%	10%	53.98%	-0.05%	10.02%
2	06 08	Bayou St John	28%	12%	56.73%	2.70%	9.32%

A table of 2025 precinct data for BobVar and ProgVar.

I decided to reach out to other potential candidates, previous supporters, and community leaders about running again, and received enough support to declare my candidacy in October 2024. The incumbent was term limited, so it would be an open race. Two former staffers of the incumbent, both Democrats occupying a moderate/centrist political stance from Audubon and Lakeview, declared their intentions as well. The three of us were the only candidates to raise money before the beginning of 2025, with another two (Democrat and Republican) qualifying in July.

DSA City Council slate

Towards the end of 2024, myself and another DSA member Danyelle Christmas expressed our intentions to run for City Council in open races as per the electoral strategy. Later a third member, Jackson Kimbrell, expressed his intent to run against an unpopular incumbent as per the electoral strategy. The three of us met and proposed a resolution for a City Council strategy to run candidates on a platform that was derived from each individual candidate and the People's Platform that was passed as part of the electoral strategy. Additionally, there were three goals that we laid out that represented what could be accomplished by the chapter as part of the electoral campaign:

1. Get 1,000 Make Entergy Pay signatures
2. Recruit 100 new members
3. Engage 80% of our members doing list work.

This resolution passed unanimously in January, and in March our chapter voted to officially endorse each of the three candidates. In June during our local convention, our chapter declined to renew the Make Entergy Pay campaign, which made the first goal of this strategy obsolete. At the local convention, I was elected Membership Chair, and I ran on ensuring new members joining during this campaign would be better integrated into our chapter than we had done previously, as well as establish best practices on retaining members (we had a large number of lapsed members before my term).

That June, Pastor Gregory Manning joined the chapter and wished to pursue the endorsement as well, which was introduced at our convention & passed in mid July. This slate of 4 candidates included 3 district races and one city-wide, two candidates running No Party, and two candidates running against incumbents. All the candidates agreed to our endorsement expectations, and all agreed to our basic campaign demands, specifically around regulating Entergy and moving towards municipalization. Others included our commitment to Palestine and BDS, opposition to short term rentals, opposition to surveillance technologies, and more.

Political introduction

Political choices for DSA electoral campaigns

Projects are not agnostic to politics, in fact the political choices of people planning and executing projects are made continuously, and having a coherent political agenda makes it clearer on what the project hopes to achieve. There are a range of debates within DSA on what kind of candidates should be representing DSA on the ballot. Should we be supporting progressive Dems who aren't members of DSA? Should we only support "cadre" candidates who developed politically as DSA organizers? Should we stop supporting people that run as Democrats or does it matter based on the level of office or local conditions? None of these

debates have been resolved under the current big-tent nature of national DSA, but they do inform the choices made in deliberation.

In DSA, there are certain political choices made about what kind of campaign to run, what kind of candidates to run and endorse, and what is DSA doing in these campaigns. These choices are rarely debated and decided upon by members at the national level outside of national convention every two years. Instead, the National Electoral Commission (formerly the National Electoral Committee) is tasked with implementing the decisions from national convention, including resolutions passed at the behest of the NEC, as well as relying on the experience of one paid DSA staffer.

Previously the NEC had a closed application process, which prevented rank and file DSA members from across the country from participating in the execution of national electoral decisions or electing the steering committee of the NEC that ultimately recommends national endorsements. The NEC was reformed at 2023's National Convention as the National Electoral Commission, which opened membership to all DSA members in good standing. However, the election¹² of the steering committee was held using a series of weighted votes based on previous national endorsement campaigns, essentially locking out massive swaths of DSA membership from participation. Eventually, there was a STV election of the steering committee from rank and file NEC members held in early 2025 and again in December 2025, and the trajectory of NEC is moving towards one that attempts to bring in more chapters into the process, as well as finding other avenues of support such as Socialist Cash Takes out Capitalist Trash fundraising.

It's worth noting that the 2025 National Convention was held in July 2025, and the national endorsement for my campaign was submitted well prior to the convention. The NEC tabled discussion and decision on my national endorsement recommendation only until after convention, further delaying any material support like Socialist Cash for the campaign that would have been magnified at National Convention. At convention, the NEC's resolution was passed that outlined further recommendations on these political choices.

What kind of campaign

The first political choice I experienced was what kind of campaign to run. First, the national compliance officer suggested our local endorsement campaigns should be coordinated rather than independent expenditure. A coordinated campaign would not have any money raised or spent by the chapter, and would be limited to using free chapter resources like social media and our member list to encourage people to volunteer and donate directly to the candidates. The chapter isn't necessarily running the campaign, but is there to channel support to a candidate through volunteer labor and coordination of efforts using materials purchased by the candidate and not DSA. This was suggested to reduce risk of compliance penalties and to simplify our process of supporting candidates.

¹² Red Star Caucus. <https://redstarcaucus.org/critique-and-reflection-on-the-nec-steering-election/>

Alternatively, an independent expenditure campaign would have additional focus on raising and spending money on literature, ads, and branding to be explicitly DSA, making the endorsement campaign more in line with what one would expect from a political party & the relationship to the candidate.

This choice shapes the nature of the campaign and its relationship to the chapter, but is often made without considering the political implications. As such, it's not typically a consideration in the national endorsement, where independent expenditure campaigns from larger and more mature electoral programs like NYC are able to run a specific type of campaign that is DSA branded and is exclusively about furthering DSA in line with national priorities as opposed to smaller chapters who do not necessarily dictate the direction of the campaign but have tighter coordination with candidate's campaign through a small number of DSA members.

What kind of candidate

The second political choice I experienced on what kind of candidate to run and support was during the national endorsement application process for Lauren Jewett. Looking at the National Electoral Strategy, the NEC & DSA as a whole had specific recommendations on candidates to recruit that were, in turn, not held up as standards for endorsement and support, such as running "working-class organizers with an existing base of support." One trend that appeared in the late 2010's and early 2020's was smaller chapters in the South who attempted to get national endorsement support and were repeatedly denied. Our hope was, by having an electoral strategy in line with the NEC and National Convention, that we could end this trend.

National endorsement is important for analysis of DSA as a larger political project for electoral campaigns. Some view national endorsement only as a material support for campaigns deemed sufficient for the needed support. Others view the national endorsement as yet another logo to add to a list of organizations that are supporting a campaign to show how robust the base of support is for a campaign. However, a critical aspect of a national endorsement is the dialectical relationship between DSA as a local and national political project and whether mandates from the highest decision making body (National Convention) are being upheld by both the local and national bodies that enact these decisions. It is my argument that in spite of our attempts on the local level to implement an electoral program in line with the consent of the general DSA membership, the national body responsible for the national electoral program was not in line, particularly around the NEC SC's decisions on Lauren Jewett (a public school teacher and longtime union organizer) and Devin Davis (prominent Black LGBTQ+ leader with VOTE as both an electoral organizer and community organizer).

The NEC questionnaire was exhaustive, almost to the point of being so large to dissuade participation (which was the case for Mandie Landry's declining to pursue a national endorsement). Nevertheless, Lauren filled out the questionnaire, and our chapter was asked to fill out a dossier with relevant campaign information. After submitting the application, Lauren was interviewed, and the NEC steering committee met to vote on recommendation. Looking at the feedback provided, one NEC SC member mentioned that Lauren's employment in a charter school was a problem, which is inexplicable considering all public schools in New Orleans at the

time were charter schools, and as a union teacher, Lauren advocated for a return to direct run schools (and is currently employed at the only school run by the school district). As such, the NEC recommended against endorsement, and it never reached the NPC for approval.

Similarly, when applying for Devin Davis for Congress, the chapter had to fill out the long questionnaire and dossier, and after having an interview, were told that the campaign wasn't viable enough and lacked enough chapter volunteers to warrant a national endorsement. The NPC, however, passed the endorsement with a small majority of votes that spanned caucus affiliation (Groundwork and Red Star, for example, both voted Yes).

All told, the goalposts seemed to either move or standards unevenly applied compared to other nationally endorsed candidates within the same election cycles. This is due to a number of factors, one of which is a lack of a rubric to determine whether applicants meet standards set by the National Convention.

Campaign relation to DSA

Before being endorsed by the local chapter in early 2025, I reached out to the national DSA staffer in charge of electoral work to review what was available to DSA members, potential strategies for running a successful campaign, and ways to develop our local chapter's electoral program. This is where I experienced the political choice on the preferred relationship of DSA to campaigns. During the course of the call, I was shown a variety of spreadsheets that were made to do basic computations all centered around win numbers, voter universe, volunteers needed for knocking doors, and call time to recruit those volunteers. These concepts as well as critical analysis of these concepts are explored later in the "Hypothesis" section.

The gist of the conversation was chapters should run a single campaign that becomes the primary focus of the entire chapter and is the primary funnel of the chapter's engagement and support, with large "kickoff" events happening regularly to solicit large amounts of volunteers to show up for canvassing or phonebanking. New members become volunteer labor with the hope that they develop into campaign leadership then chapter leadership, irrespective of incoming member political development or capacity. Additionally, the chapter is recommended to constantly ask members to donate or volunteer utilizing tools like Action Network emails, Scale to Win phone and text campaigns to members, and making volunteer requests at every DSA event. These strategies and tactics aren't an immutable part of running a candidate for office, but rather emerge from certain political assumptions, which often remain unspoken. As such, this choice is one of the most consequential choices, and it is critical to inspect who makes the choice and how democratically the choice was made.

It is my belief that critical flaws exist in the current use of electoralism within national DSA from the political theory cohered by specific¹³ tendencies¹⁴ that predominate both the NEC and larger

¹³ Socialist Majority Caucus.

<https://www.socialistmajority.com/theagitator/winning-as-a-socialist-on-the-dem-line>

¹⁴ Groundwork DSA. <https://www.groundworkdsa.com/tasks-perspectives>

chapters with a history of nationally endorsed campaigns. These campaigns are run in a way that Marta Harnecker describes succinctly in *Ideas for the Struggle*:

“[W]hat tends to occur is that... the left uses the same techniques that the ruling classes uses to sell its candidates and seek votes.”¹⁵

The political choices of what kind of campaigns to run, what kind of candidates to endorse, and the relationship between the local DSA chapters and the campaigns are all being made either by unelected staff or a small body of members elected by a body of unelected NEC members. These decisions are often informed from experiences with Democratic party campaigns utilizing capitalist institutional practices like chasing win numbers. The “DSA difference” is billed as something that separates DSA campaigns from capitalist ones, yet I found myself disagreeing with its principal goal of campaigning - to get the most votes. There was no critical lens of what electoral campaigns are designed to do outside of “being elected to office” and as such rejected supporting any other kind of campaigning or adaptations to local conditions that didn’t match certain cities in the country.

Other ways to run socialist electoral campaigns

During our chapter electoral committee’s first meeting after the 2025 election, one member incorrectly described my campaign as “not planning to win.” This, in my opinion, is a chasm between reformists and revolutionaries within DSA and socialism in general, that revolutionaries do in fact run campaigns to win without capitulating political platforms or trying to get votes as a first priority.

In my opinion, one of the more successful examples of this kind of socialist elected in this country recently is Kshama Sawant. In spite of her independent agitational campaign and position on Seattle City Council, her proposals were incredibly popular and she utilized the office to introduce massive quality of life improvements for working people, including a significant raise to the minimum wage and protections for renters and workers. She did not run a typical DSA campaign and not only was she elected to office in a major city, she also successfully defended a recall effort. What separates Kshama’s campaign from a typical DSA campaign, in my opinion, is the political decisions she and her political organizing partners made on what kind of campaign to run, what kind of candidate to be, and how to relate the campaign to socialist organizations like DSA and Socialist Alternative. Her public identification as a Marxist and principled choices are something that stood out in contrast to nationally endorsed DSA candidates and the false dichotomy of DSA candidates running with a “goal of propaganda and agitation rather than winning and wielding power¹⁶.” Why not both?

After the 2021 election, I wanted to sharpen my own political analysis of electoralism and socialists participating in bourgeois elections. My political development over the years led me

¹⁵ Marta Harnecker, *Ideas for the Struggle*, 8.3, Pg 25.

https://socialist-alliance.org/sites/default/files/ideas_for_the_struggle.pdf

¹⁶ Groundwork DSA, Electoral section. <https://www.groundworkdsa.com/tasks-perspectives>

towards Marxism Leninism; many on the left and in DSA incorrectly assume ML is anti-electoral, and as such there is a veiled anti-communist rhetoric towards ML electoral theory. I read *The Ballots, The Streets - Or Both?* by August Nimitz in 2022 and from my practical experience running for office and organizing within DSA, I connected with a number of pieces from the text that came directly from Lenin, Marx, and Engels. I dived into the footnotes and read the cited texts and the political discussions that they were relevant to, as well as other texts like *Left Wing Communism*. I eventually joined the DSA national caucus Red Star, and worked on a piece with others called "Why Marxists Should Run for Office in the US" to better clarify some of the arguments made with a number of texts such as Lenin's *Left Wing Communism* and Harnecker's *Ideas for the Struggle* and Fidel Castro's *Political Strategy*.

Marxists should run for office primarily as organizers to recruit people into the party (i.e. DSA), to use the spectacle of elections as a pulpit to heighten class consciousness, and to contrast opposition as part of the capitalist system that exploits workers. You can still run a winning campaign by using the tactics of any electoral campaign to get votes, but winning cannot be the primary initiative of the campaign and shouldn't sacrifice principles, independence, or socialist political choices in favor of garnering more votes. More details on these political theorizations will be published by Red Star separate from this case study, but offers a deeper analysis that informs the political theory developed in the Strategies and Tactics section.

In 2025 I qualified and ran as an independent (No Party). The primary reason was I did not morally feel comfortable putting "Democrat" next to my name on a ballot after the abandonment of trans kids by the state Democrats and the support of genocide in Palestine by the federal and local Democrats. Cost implications (VoteBuilder access, double the Louisiana qualifying fee), composition of OPDEC's District A body, and the fact that independents and third party voters make up a significant portion of registered voters in District A (and the largest of the 5 districts) made this specific race a potential opportunity to test how an independent candidate could perform in New Orleans.

New Orleans DSA electoral strategy

When I ran for City Council in 2021, I did so as recommended by the NEC's National Electoral Strategy 2021-2022¹⁷ that passed at the 2021 National Convention to run municipal elections in 2021. The National Electoral Strategy had a number of recommendations, and when the local chapter did not appear to follow any of those recommendations, it was clear that local intervention was needed to either explore why the local chapter didn't follow these recommendations, or find the steps necessary to align with national electoral strategy. What's

¹⁷ National DSA, 2021-2022 National Electoral Strategy, Page 11.

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VpSL2DnwVtk93aYoiFlhtpHW8mXpHELL/view> Recommendations for 2021 off-year elections:

Local races: Races at the municipal and county level present an opportunity to build a strong base and unite the coalition needed to win larger races. At this stage, most chapters should focus on districted races that require fewer votes to win. More developed chapters should consider running slates of candidates around common messaging to advance an issue campaign.

more, these recommendations only ran through 2022, and there were several important local races after 2022 that were impactful.

After becoming co-chair of the Municipal Action Committee, I called for a meeting of the Electoral Working Group and began to explore some questions about electoral work and how our chapter participates. As outlined in the approved electoral strategy resolution¹⁸:

The Electoral Working Group (EWG) has developed the following goals to achieve over the next few years:

1. Recommend or endorse candidates
 - a. Oct 14 2023: State legislature
 - b. Nov 5 2024: School board
 - c. Work with other Louisiana chapters to form a slate if possible
2. Recruit at least one candidate to run and endorse in the Oct 11 2025 parochial elections
3. Develop an electoral vision for New Orleans with community organizers & DSA membership

The EWG recommends the following electoral strategies:

1. Recommend or endorse candidates running for State Legislature (2023), School Board (2024), and Parochial elections (2025) and recruit candidates against vulnerable incumbents and expected vacancies.
2. Incorporate issue campaigns, coalition work, and other mandates from the General Membership where possible
3. Establish the infrastructure to run endorsement campaigns
4. Establish an elected socialists committee of elected members of the chapter
5. Join or establish & develop a united front electoral coalition around advancing a vision for the future of New Orleans and supporting candidates who can fulfill that vision

Within the electoral strategy document, you'll notice that my personal electoral theory (from the Marxist Leninist perspective) is not reflected in the document. This is pulling almost exclusively from existing national DSA documents of the time (DSA's political program before the "Workers Deserve More" replaced it, resolutions passed at the 2021 National Convention, and the 2021-2022 National Electoral Strategy), and is leveraging the political perspective of the national organization around its supposed political choices on who to run, what races to run, and how to run the races. There are specific citations in the national electoral strategy that outline the direction on these decisions. The application of these strategies locally was important, and over the course of the three years from the local electoral strategy's passage to the authoring of this case study, there have been several local members who have contributed to achieving the goals laid out and the reforms within our chapter. The political choices made at the local level, while operating downstream of the political choices made at the national level,

¹⁸ New Orleans DSA.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1TAUXDsIMcXBizImFPJWPbC6qNhSL24FrYQJJgvybKMnY/edit?tab=t.0>

represent a dynamic between chapters and national that should be explored further that is outside the scope of this case study.

An interesting goal from the local electoral strategy was the formation of a political program (People's Platform), a broader coalition outside of the chapter, and the use of electoral campaigns to further a shared vision. This idea of a united front was developed as an idea from multiple members of a variety of political tendencies, but drew from the local conditions as explained in the Historical introduction section. Even in 2022, we identified the rising influence of right wing ideology on the neoliberal leadership in City Hall as well as in the state legislature and governor's office. The collapse of the state Democratic Party, the void of coherent political organizations locally, and the increased popularity of progressive politics lent itself to some formation to be had, and the local chapter agreed that DSA should provide the leadership towards cohering this formation. This can be interpreted as a "partyist" tendency, but was never developed intentionally in that direction, but from the holistic discussion on our local conditions and what the chapter was capable of accomplishing.

I also want to revisit the 2025 City Council strategy that was submitted by myself and two other candidates and the three goals that we laid out that represented what could be accomplished by the chapter as part of the electoral campaign:

1. Get 1,000 Make Entergy Pay signatures
2. Recruit 100 new members
3. Engage 80% of our members doing list work.

Note the first goal advances a political priority from the chapter (Make Entergy Pay was a public power campaign that had been a priority of the chapter since 2023) in line with the electoral strategy. Building the chapter membership through recruitment and retention is a political choice that I advocated for from the Marxist electoral perspective to build the party. This was a selling point for many affirmative speakers for the resolution to not only run someone for City Council, but to run multiple candidates in different districts that could recruit new members from across the city, particularly in neighborhoods where we don't have a lot of members. When I ran for membership chair at the local convention, there was no objection from members about already being an endorsed candidate.

Political questions

The questions that preceded this case study were asked a few times in different varieties. Can a DSA candidate win in New Orleans? The chapter answered that question "yes" twice during the course of the 2022-2025 electoral strategic vision. What can we achieve by running DSA campaigns? We saw the SYNLC campaigns successfully fund libraries for twenty years. Do we continue to use the Democratic ballot line? This is questionably answered, with more losses than victories running on the Democratic line, and the DSCC and DPEC candidates having limited impact on the direction of the city and state Democratic parties towards DSA's political program.

One question that wasn't answered from these efforts is what this case study attempts to answer. Can someone run a successful independent socialist campaign in New Orleans?

Hypothesis

Marta Harnecker's *Ideas for the Struggle* contain a few chapters that cover electoral work from "the left" within the global majority, particularly in Latin America. There is a specific hypothesis that she introduces:

"[I]f campaigns were conceived from a pedagogical point of view, where election campaigns are used to deepen awareness and popular organisation. Then, even if the electoral results are not the most favorable, the time and effort invested in the campaign are not wasted."¹⁹

What is interesting about this hypothesis is that electoral results are separate from campaign results. This hypothesis stems from the previous observation about how "the left" typically runs electoral campaigns:

"[W]hat tends to occur is that— instead of carrying out an educational, pedagogical campaign that serves to increase the organisation and awareness of the people — the left uses the same techniques that the ruling classes uses to sell its candidates and seek votes."²⁰

The last part of that quotation feels very personal to my previous experience running as a progressive Democrat in 2021. When I was endorsed by Run For Something, I was given access to a number of tools and trainings provided to their candidates. One of these was the National Democratic Training Center (NDTC), a website with tutorials and videos on how to run a campaign in the various ways the Democratic Party (and most of the NGO industry) run electoral campaigns. This includes some industry concepts like win number, universes, call time, etc. that require some closer inspection and exploring the underlying mathematical assumptions about their truth.

Critique of conventional electoral math

From a project manager's perspective, these concepts seemed like methodologies void of scientific inquiry and more of a rigid "how things are done" playbook. One example was creating a rolodex of everyone you know to contact about donating money. The ethics laws set a maximum of \$2,500 from one individual, so the training suggested I make that ask to people I know to get the highest possible asks. I'm working class, I'm not socially networked with people who even have \$2,500 in their checking account, much less that much expendable money for

¹⁹ Marta Harnecker, *Ideas for the Struggle*, 8.5, Pg 25

https://socialist-alliance.org/sites/default/files/ideas_for_the_struggle.pdf

²⁰ Ibid. 8.3, Pg 25

something like an electoral campaign! The more I practiced these concepts on a practical application in my grassroots campaign, I found contradictions of socialists using this framework.

Based on my experience with these concepts, this model for electoral campaigns acts more of a playbook for those connected to wealth and influence than low income working class people. It is agnostic of campaign platform, partisan affiliation, or leadership styles. It works backwards from guesses without inspecting assumptions and is too rigid in its methods to account for local conditions. This attachment to unattached assumptions is what is fundamentally flawed with this form of idealism manifesting as electoralism. It is a strategy of ends (getting elected) that justify the means (chasing win number).

Within DSA, there are political tendencies, caucuses, and notable members who argue the logic and arithmetic that you run campaigns to reach a win number and you get that number from people who answer a door you knocked. It's ignorant to people informed from voter guides, mailers, yard signs, organizational and individual endorsements, etc. without any quantitative data to show correlation between door knocking and votes secured. It doesn't resolve the notion of gaining votes by compromising principled values or platform positions. Most importantly, it's agnostic of the individual candidate themselves.

A deeper analysis of these mathematical concepts and criticism of the low order of complexity, and an exploration of a higher order of mathematical complexity, can be found in the Appendix for "Conventional electoral mathematical concepts"²¹.

There are some assumptions worth probing. First, it assumes no one changes their mind after they indicate they're a positive ID - that is, the positive ID is a static moment in time and doesn't change, which would typically be resolved with multiple points of contact with positive IDs. Additionally, it only looks at the impact of knocking doors towards the win number and not the other actions taken during a campaign. Most notably, it assumes a linear scale - positive ID rate and answer rate scale up with more doors you knock. We know that this isn't grounded in reality - canvassing in Lakeview in 2021 resulted in expended time and resources that did not increase positive IDs and therefore didn't increase the probability of winning.

Win number hypotheses

Based on the conditions of my district as outlined in the Historical introduction, increased canvassing isn't guaranteed to increase votes and the people who actually vote in elections in my district historically do not vote a majority for leftist candidates regardless of volume of direct voter contact. A "successful" campaign operating from this model of electoral campaigning requires obtaining the win number, leaving two possible hypotheses to test:

- 1) If you run a leftist electoral campaign in a district that doesn't have enough voters who vote for leftist candidates, then you will need to moderate your platform to appeal to enough voters that don't typically vote for leftists to achieve the win number.

²¹ [Conventional electoral mathematical concepts](#)

- 2) If you run a leftist electoral campaign in a district that doesn't have enough voters who vote for leftist candidates, then you will need to activate enough of the electorate that doesn't vote chronically and register enough new voters to achieve the win number.

Hypothesis #1 required a sacrifice of the underlying political theory I ascribed to, which runs counter to running a principled socialist campaign, so it was eliminated.

Hypothesis #2 would prove to be difficult to test as well for a number of reasons. The class composition of non-chronic voters is mostly renters who do not live in one place for more than four years and voter registration data often lists renters who do not live where they are listed. Next, there is a sizable portion of those not registered to vote due to previous conviction history, resulting in additional time and resources for record expungement and registration that can't be done in one interaction. Third, there is a sizable portion of the non-chronic voting base that do not participate in elections intentionally, either due to a lack of faith/trust in the system or for other political reasons. While this provides an opportunity to recruit someone to DSA or raise class consciousness, it deflates the GOTV effectiveness and requires more persuasion.

Accounting for low turnout from people who are registered to vote is insufficient when ignoring the population that isn't even registered to vote that, in theory, could be registered. To test this hypothesis would require a scale of organizing, political education, voter registration allowed under state laws, and money to purchase materials that would not be available to me, and is duplicative of efforts from existing organizations like VOTE, Power Coalition, and Committee for a Better New Orleans.

When factoring in the local historical and material conditions, the use of electoral campaigns to achieve a win number for a leftist candidate in my district is the wrong outcome to test. More to the point, I've seen campaigns that do knock enough doors for a win number not win campaigns in New Orleans, and other campaigns that did win without reaching their target for doors knocked. As such, we need a hypothesis that will not attempt to prove the concepts of how electoral campaigns are run under the capitalist model by the Analyst Institute or NDTC to achieve a win number.

Multi-objective optimization

Instead of the single-objective "win number" model, I propose using a multi-objective framework²² as a way to articulate Harnecker's insight on the separation of campaign results

²² This multi-stream probability model employs an additive structure for clarity and illustrative purposes. It assumes the impact $w_a^{(k)}(t)$ of a given action a is independent of the campaign's current state $P_k(t)$ and that effects of concurrent actions sum directly. In reality, these concepts do not hold rigidly. This framework serves as a crucial approximation that highlights potential strategic trade-offs between electoral, movement-building, and awareness goals that are explicit and quantifiable for discussion. Future refinements could incorporate non-linearities and spatial relationships to highlight how an action in conservative Lakeview will have different weights than the same action in friendlier Bayou St. John.

from election results. In this model, the outcomes of a campaign change over time across multiple streams, such as:

$P_v(t)$: Probability of electoral victory (win number) over time t

$P_m(t)$: Probability of movement-building (DSA member recruitment) over time t

$P_a(t)$: Probability of increasing awareness (campaign materials reach) over time t

This mathematical concept as applied to electoral campaigns is more fully explained in the Appendix for “Multi-objective optimization”²³. This way of thinking about what a campaign or candidate does is important, because it can help conceptualize how every action taken affects multiple outcomes rather than just getting the win number. It’s not a judgement or to say one action is better than another. In an ideal world, all of these actions are positively weighted towards all the objectives! Moreover, if the circumstances are favorable, you can have a candidate whose probability of electoral victory is so high (such as Rep. Rashida Tlaib) that you can use available resources towards other actions that increase movement building or raising awareness at the expense of slightly reducing electoral victory likelihood.

Depending on the political terrain or choice made by the campaign, we can highlight how some actions can benefit all of these probabilities (like a Zohran Mamdani’s affordability campaign ad) while some actions may have a higher value than others that carry neutral or negative values, or vice versa depending on the actions and audience. Here are some illustrative examples from Mamdani’s campaign of what these vectors could look like for the weights towards the probability of electoral victory, movement building, and increasing awareness:

- Running as a democratic socialist: $w_a(0) \approx (-0.10, +0.35, +0.20)$
- Taking an early strong stance on Palestine: $w_a(1 \text{ month}) \approx (-0.15, +0.30, +0.35)$
- Releasing an ad about affordable groceries: $w_a(2 \text{ months}) \approx (+0.55, +0.05, +0.80)$
- Reframing defunding the police: $w_a(4 \text{ months}) \approx (+0.45, -0.55, -0.25)$
- Walking back stance on Palestine: $w_a(1 \text{ month before Election Day}) \approx (+0.25, -0.25, -0.30)$
- Knocking doors on election day: $w_a(\text{Election Day}) \approx (+0.20, 0, 0)$

These weight vectors are not random but can be derived relative to historical data, local conditions, and how they’re executed. For instance, our precinct-level analysis of leftist candidate performance since 2021 provides a quantitative baseline for estimating the electoral impact of actions in different neighborhoods like Lakeview compared to Bayou St. John. Similarly, our voter scoring model outlined in Strategies and Tactics helps estimate the actions with targeting renters, progressives, union households, etc. Precise numerical weights remain theoretical, and the exercise of estimating values highlights the nature of the actions made by campaigns that have trade-offs of strategic results from every single action, such as moderating rhetoric for electability at the cost of reducing movement building, or vice versa. This transforms political principle and candidate discipline into quantifiable strategic and tactical values.

²³ [Multi-objective optimization](#)

This multi-objective framework clarifies why conventional electoral strategies can be inadequate for most American socialist campaigns, particularly in districts not friendly to socialists, because it only values whether electoral victory was achieved. The “win number” model implicitly reduces the campaign to a single-variable optimization. Looking at the two rejected hypotheses from this premise:

- Hypothesis 1: Choose campaign actions with high positive weights for electoral victory that may be neutral or negative weights for movement building or raising awareness, such as moderating platform positions, seeking mainstream endorsements, and avoiding radical rhetoric.
- Hypothesis 2: Attempt to increase the electoral victory with a significant increase in total actions that can accrue probability for electoral victory but at increased resource cost and uncertain probability of success.

Both hypotheses suffer from the same flaw: they treat electoral victory as the sole objective function. This ignores the reality that for a socialist candidate in the imperial core, electoral campaigns can (and should) be multi-objective. The conventional hypotheses force a choice to optimize for electoral victory alone while likely sacrificing principled positions that movement-building and increasing awareness rely on. A socialist campaign unlikely to achieve a win number can instead pursue a different optimization towards other outcomes like movement-building and increasing awareness while maintaining a non-zero probability for electoral victory²⁴.

²⁴ The model assumes a non-zero value for $P_v(t)$ throughout the campaign not because winning is the goal, but because a zero probability during the duration of the campaign would undermine the campaign's platform credibility and access to forums and media, thereby also depressing P_m and P_a . This does not, however, preclude campaigns that ultimately land on Election Day at 0% probability of winning ($P_v(T)$), as the probability field does not collapse until Election Day when such a time we know whether they won or lost. This reflects the Marxist stance of running candidates “even when there is no prospect whatsoever of their being elected” because the act of running presupposes a non-zero value, if minimal, for electoral probability as a condition for effective propaganda. While a campaign may result in $P_v(T) = 0$ on Election Day and α is set to a low coefficient, if there is zero probability during the campaign a successful campaign cannot get value from the other outcomes $P_m(t)$ and $P_a(t)$.

One practical example is joke candidates like Manny Chevrolet, who always qualifies for mayor of New Orleans but doesn't actually campaign. Since there is an absence of actions to accrue probability there is little or no intrinsic value to the campaign. This hypothesis and multi-objective framework rejects the false dichotomy between “running to win” and “not running to win” as demonstrated later with full field, GOTV, and fundraising plans. Instead of this false dichotomy, we will calibrate our campaign's value strategy to maximize probabilities other than $P_v(T)$ by having $\beta \approx \gamma > \alpha$ with a non-zero $P_v(t)$. This represents the break in this false dichotomy: a campaign that is tactically gaining positive IDs but strategically prioritized toward building lasting organizing and awareness.

A Marxist hypothesis

“Even when there is no prospect whatsoever of their being elected, the workers must put up their own candidates in order to preserve their independence, to count their forces, and to lay before the public their revolutionary attitude and party standpoint.”²⁵
-Marx & Engels

Lenin once described parliamentarianism as “Helping to enlighten and organize wider masses of the population than those which previously took an active part in political events” and that it “doesn’t eliminate, but lays bare the innate character of even the most democratic bourgeois republics as organs of class oppression.”²⁶ With this understanding of how the probability of winning isn’t the only factor of campaign success, I propose a hypothesis grounded in Marxist electoral theory:

If we run an independent socialist campaign that identifies and targets multiracial working class people, pushes class conflict, uplifts the DSA program and encourages people to join DSA, then we can increase political awareness through campaign materials, find areas where DSA’s candidates and program are popular, and recruit people to DSA.

Let’s inspect some of these terms from the hypothesis:

- “independent” - not on the Democratic ballot line, “No Party” in Louisiana
- “socialist” - explicit in characterizing the candidate as a socialist, has a platform that introduces reforms that remove profit incentive and increase public control over resources and capital
- “multiracial working class people” - a demographic that is not predominated by any particular racial makeup and is characterized by renters, those with lower household income, those that are members of unions, or class conscious people who support leftist efforts and candidates
- “campaign materials” - printed literature, social media, texts, mailers, and websites

The measurables for success of this hypothesis will be:

- The volume of campaign materials & awareness of them
- Locations where DSA candidates and program are popular
- Number of people who joined DSA

How does this translate to our probability streams and overall campaign value? Our hypothesis is that by choosing campaign actions with high positive weights for movement building and raising awareness (even if those same actions have momentary negative or neutral weights for electoral victory) then we can achieve measurable organizational growth and a discursive shift independent from the final election results on Election Day.

²⁵ Marx & Engels, Address of the Central Committee 1850.

<https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/communist-league/1850-ad1.htm>

²⁶ V. Lenin, Marxism and Revisionism. <https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1908/apr/03.htm>

Considering the probability of electoral victory is low based on historical election data in the district, our campaign will consciously value DSA membership growth and expanded awareness somewhat above vote maximization where each coefficient is greater than zero. Note that this does not completely abandon collecting positive IDs or presenting the campaign as one that doesn't attempt to win. Each tactical choice can have positive weights along all streams or potentially have strategic trade-offs between different probability streams depending on the action's impact, but ultimately these are shifts in probabilities, not guarantees.

Strategies and Tactics

With a clear hypothesis to test, it was important to define the general strategies and specific tactics to execute that are in line with the philosophical background of the hypothesis.

Who to target & how

First, it was important to have a clear strategy on who the audience of this campaign was. As mentioned in the hypothesis, we want to target “multiracial working class people” with the goal of organizing into DSA and heightening class consciousness.

There are a few strategic choices to make:

- Targeting precincts with multiracial working class populations
- Targeting precincts more inclined to vote for class-conscious leftist candidates and progressive ballot measures
- Targeting individual voters who are multiracial working class people or more inclined to a leftist candidate

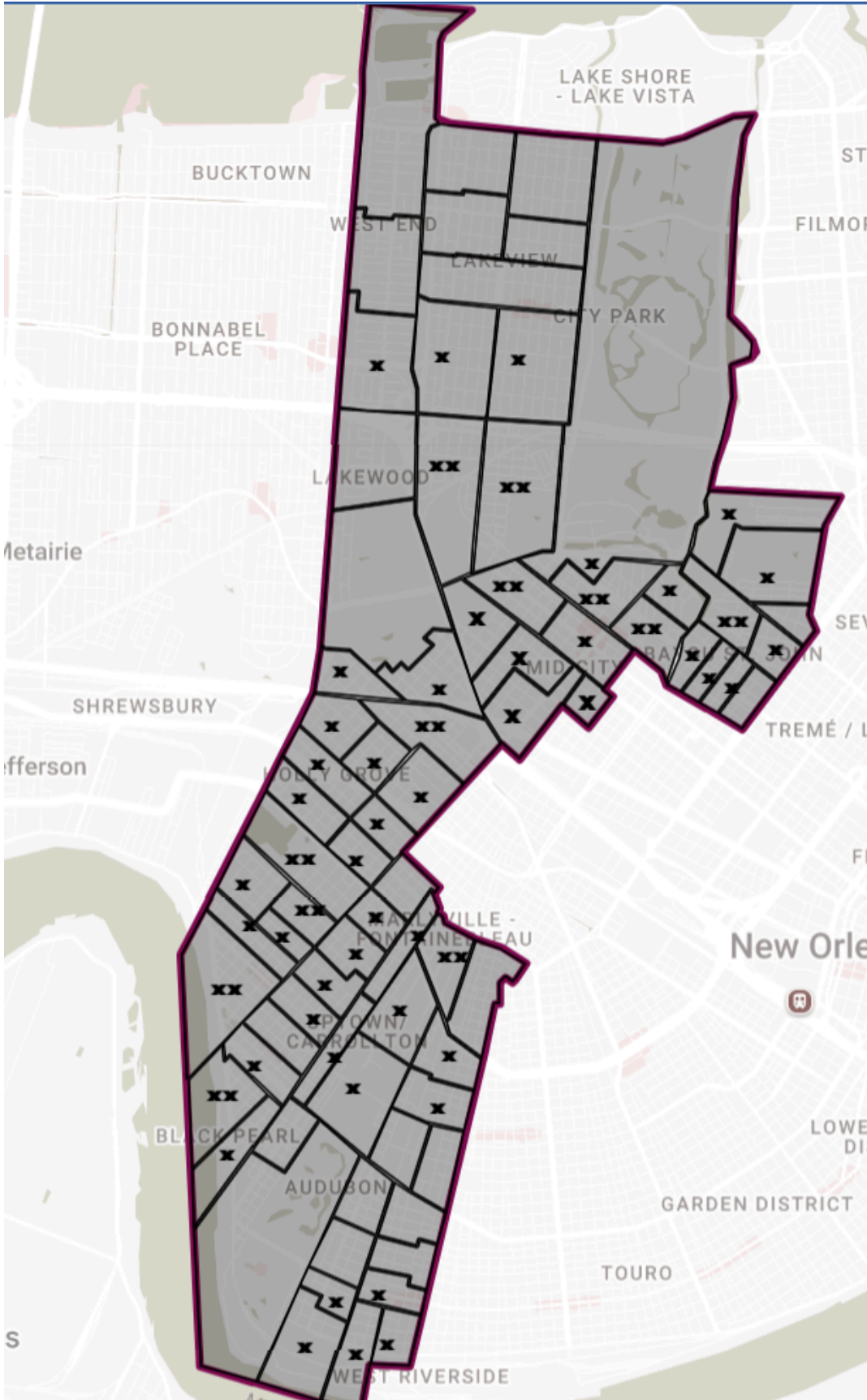
These strategic choices can be implemented with a number of tactical choices.

1. Using voter registration data and The Data Center's research²⁷ on socioeconomic conditions of New Orleans, we identified precincts that are majority Black, have a higher concentration of poverty than the New Orleans average, have higher than New Orleans average of housing-burdened population, and have a higher than New Orleans average of low-wage household income.
2. Using the district's election results for leftist candidates and progressive ballot measures as outlined in the Historical introduction, we identified precincts that are friendly based on how they perform compared to the average precinct in District A.
3. Using metadata from a purchased voter list, we were able to construct a numeric score²⁸ computed on values of each voter based on voter activity, party registration, whether they are in a union, whether they identify as progressive, whether they've donated to environmental causes, whether they've donated to conservative or liberal candidates, if they are a renter, and a sliding scale based on age and household income.

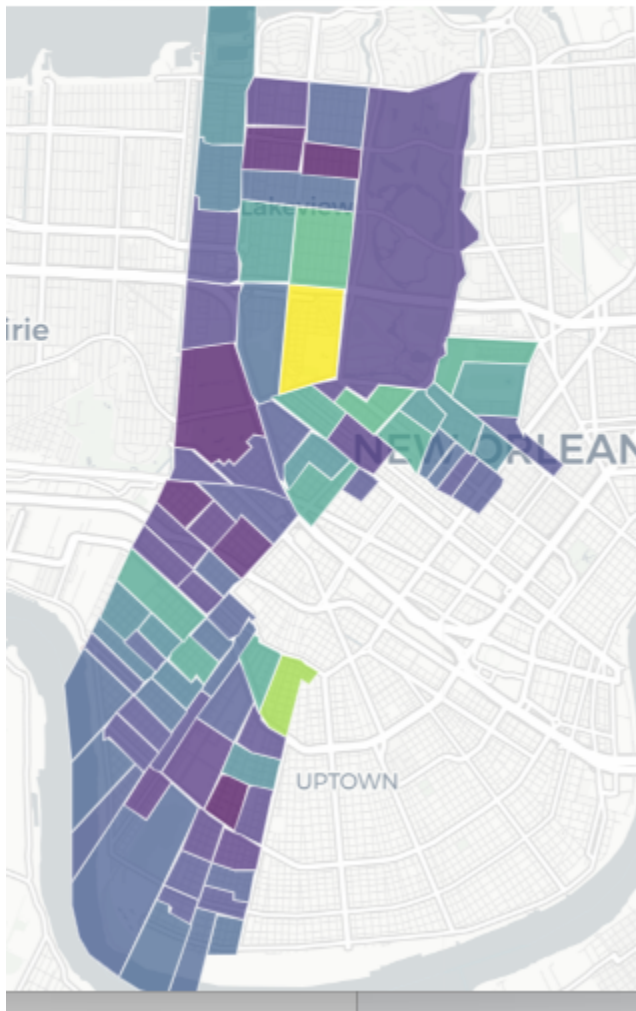
²⁷ <https://www.datacenterresearch.org/>

²⁸ [Voter Score computation](#)

First, we identified precincts to target out of the 77 total precincts. For #1, we indicated a precinct with an X if they had two of any of the four indicators. For #2, we indicated a precinct with an X if the Prog% of the precinct was higher than the precinct average Prog%. This yielded 45 X precincts and 12 XX precincts. These 57 precincts were put onto a list for our field plan, along with precincts that were nearby where I lived so that I could canvass on my own after work and with my daughter when she wanted to tag along, totaling **61 targeted precincts**.



A map of the District A precincts, with “X” and “XX” based on multiracial demographics and previous voting preferences.



Map of precincts in District A. Precincts highlighted by Prog% multiplied by turnout to indicate a typical proportion of total votes for leftist candidates from purple (low) to yellow (high)

For #3, we computed the voter score and placed people into a priority category of Avoid (≤ 10), Low (≤ 20), Medium (≤ 28) and High (> 28).

Neighborhood	Precincts	Registered Voters	2021 Turnout	Avg Voter Score	Prog%
All	77	56,689	30%	20.39	54.03%
Mid City	5	3836	22%	22.21	60.50%
Hollygrove	7	4123	18%	20.85	43.92%
Bayou St John	6	3204	23%	22.49	60.80%
Fairgrounds	2	2414	21%	21.63	55.80%
City Park	4	2679	26%	22.01	56.56%
Leonidas	10	6156	22%	21	53.38%
East Carrollton	4	2796	22%	21.42	50.82%
Black Pearl	3	1566	21%	20.75	57.17%
Marlyville/Fontainebleau	4	3595	25%	21.49	53.22%
Tulane/Loyola	1	2344	3%	26.75	68.27%
West Riverside	4	2004	28%	20.49	48.23%
Audubon	13	8029	24%	20.41	40.36%
Navarre	2	2187	25%	18.22	46.23%
West End	2	2585	19%	17.43	38.79%
Lakeview	7	6981	27%	16.02	31.98%
Lakewood	3	2190	25%	16.3	32.79%

A table displaying voter data aggregated by neighborhood for number of precincts, registered voters, 2021 turnout percentage, average precinct voter score, and Prog%.

To create the turfs for each of the precincts to target for voter contact, we created a Tier system:

- Tier 1: High Priority or identify as progressive
- Tier 2: Medium Priority
- Tier 3: Low and Avoid Priorities

When cutting lists for canvassing, we targeted Tier 1 voters and included any other voters that lived at the address (for data collection purposes). For mailers, we identified 2,000 addresses with multiple Tier 1 voters in precincts we weren't targeting and for households we either did not canvass or canvassed but did not get an answer. For texting, we selected Tier 1 voters that we did not canvass or did not answer that had cell phones and did not have the do not contact flag on file.

Additionally, canvassers were instructed to attempt households that had people sitting on their porch or if the household had some identifiable signage or decor (such as Black Lives Matter, Palestine flags, or for other leftist candidates) that might be more inclined to our targeting.

Finally, there are organizations who give endorsements and groups that hold events and meetings that candidates are invited to that can be strategically attended. For example, neighborhood association meetings that are not democratic or almost exclusively land and business owners are not desirable conditions compared to more democratic institutions or those groups in more multiracial working class neighborhoods. Similarly organizations that focus on labor, racial justice, environmental issues, and food security are more likely to yield contact with

class conscious people or those more amenable to messaging than groups that represent reactionaries, business interests, etc.

What to say & how

Lenin and Marx expounded several times the importance of propaganda to their political projects, and the necessity of intentional messaging towards education, agitation, and organization. Campaign messaging, speeches, candidate forums, and questionnaires are a large part of campaigns that cost zero dollars and can make a difference. As a socialist organizer, it was something I felt comfortable pushing: tying individual struggles to the larger class struggle, highlighting specific capitalists and how neoliberalism doesn't serve the people, and pushing and urging people to get organized (particularly in DSA).

The platform in many ways is the most referenced piece of propaganda from the campaign. During the exploration phase, I asked various community organizers and leaders what are some things they wanted to see on the platform. This included people representing labor, education, libraries, youth programming, civic engagement, and more. The platform's main bullets are derived from the City Council strategy resolution based on the People's Platform, individual candidate priorities, and the Workers Deserve More program. Part of the City Council resolution passed by the chapter was an expectation that candidates would "Vocally oppose right wing and reactionary politics and politicians". This was important because 1) it drew the state and federal issues to the local race, 2) it did not allow focus to be shifted away from the use of ICE and National Guard, and 3) pushed the other candidates, particularly Democrats, to grow a spine and do or say anything in this political moment. All told the campaign platform's many policies allowed for most individuals to find something that spoke to them if articulated.

In the 2021 effort, I used the slogan "People First" to great effect. I asked supporters and volunteers if we should use it again or try something else. Some alternatives included "For The Many", but people seemed most supportive of using "People First" again. Additionally, some feedback that was given is removing the branding of "progressive choice" to ensure I wasn't confused as a progressive Democrat.

One could argue about the use of specific colors or symbols, where my previous literature used multiple shades of blue with a graphic of raised fists and roses. I wanted to use more red, but there were a few issues. First, and it's silly, the Atlanta Falcons use red as a primary color, and passionate New Orleans Saints fans are that petty. Most local Republicans don't use red as a primary campaign color. Another common piece of feedback from 2021 was my red campaign shirts made people think I was a Republican (while running as a Democrat!). I did, however, theorize that pink would resolve the issue and make our campaign shirts more comfortable to wear in hot weather.

My daughter picked out a shade of pink and using a color board she picked out a dark blue and yellow to pair with it. I tweaked contrast but kept the color scheme of pink and joked that people call me a "pinko commie" so I should wear it. I loved the previous campaign art for the rose and

used it on the red shirts, but a common feedback I got was that people didn't immediately recognize that it was a rose or its symbolic association with socialism. I played around with stars, and was inspired by the iconic New Orleans' water meters to create a logo that featured a crescent moon (New Orleans is called the Crescent City) and five stars. The only people who had an issue with this branding choice were caucused DSA members living outside of New Orleans. One of the most common pieces of positive feedback received was people's adoration of this graphic I made in Canva.

The website is something that I always considered to be the entryway to the campaign: a robust platform listed in detail, links to speeches and forums that feature things I said, and a place for people to get to know me. There was no indication from the local chapter on specific feedback or requests, but I continued to indicate I'm open to feedback. Since the website was on Google Sites, continuous updates were pretty easy to do myself.

INVEST IN OUR YOUTH **LIVABLE & SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS** **QUALITY OF LIFE**

DIGNITY FOR ALL **AFFORDABLE UTILITIES** **COMBAT CORRUPTION**

We need to give the power to the people!

- ★ Invest in our youth ★
- ★ Livable & Safe Neighborhoods ★
- ★ Improve Quality of Life ★
- ★ Dignity for All ★
- ★ Expand Democracy & Combat Corruption ★
- ★ Stop Expensive Utilities ★

Learn more about our campaign [platform](#) and [pledges](#).

Meet Bob

Bob Murrell is a community organizer, democratic socialist, activist, and leader who is dedicated to fighting for the poor, marginalized, and working people in New Orleans now and for generations to come. Let's make this city better - [together](#).

Screenshot from bob4districta.com main page.

Social media was the best platform for active propaganda, mostly through reels and stories. These types of content on Meta's platform allowed for uplifting existing groups as well as highlighting events/issues to mobilize people outside of voting. One example is a video²⁹ that I published after the newsworthy jailbreak occurred and local officials used it as a pretense to expand facial recognition technology. The local chapter account was frequently tagged as a contributor (and sometimes vice versa) to increase visibility. Additionally, the mail list of supporters, volunteers, and people subscribed for updates have a more direct platform to connect and inform. I encouraged³⁰ followers on social media to also subscribe to the mail list as well as to ensure everyone was able to access deeper analysis and ways to get engaged. The emails sent to the list included a few sentences from my voice on political coverage, urging people to join DSA, and included mobilizing asks like going on the UMC nurse picket line.

The content of the messaging itself was also critical. We kept a running document of talking points, frequently asked questions from voters, and questionnaires that were sent. This allowed for a centralized repository of messaging that could be adapted/reused as needed. On occasion there were questions that either I didn't know how to answer or was less confident in my response. I would share this with the chapter and volunteers to solicit feedback and incorporate as needed. Overall, it was important for the campaign to act as a megaphone, calling out fascism for what it is, stirring revolutionary fervor in whatever masses heard the messaging. Running independently allowed for calling out the capitalist parties where possible, that we needed to build an alternative party through DSA, and that the ballot can't be the only place to engage in democracy.

Interacting with individuals in the field meant having a flexible but deep set of talking points. It was important to listen more than talking, finding the issues that mattered to them and tying it towards the platform or candidate. Since we were targeting individuals and precincts that are less hostile, we could move efficiently when knocking doors. If someone wasn't obviously amendable, then the interaction was more to inform them about Bob running and direct people to the website or contact me. If someone was receptive to leftist messaging, then we would go deeper and make asks like volunteering for Bob and joining DSA. When encountering people who weren't registered to vote, we would encourage them to get involved with the campaign and DSA, as well as send voter registration information if it was before the deadline.

As someone who doesn't like driving, I wanted to use my bike to get around, and cycling between houses increased the number of doors I hit in a shift. After a knee injury, I purchased an electric scooter (17mph max speed) that extended my range and moved significantly quicker than on foot when canvassing alone. For shifts where I didn't have another volunteer, I would scoot, while shifts with volunteers I would walk with the volunteers to pair up if needed.

²⁹ https://www.instagram.com/reel/DKkVUcrR_U3/?igsh=NjV2emV3NWEwamtw

³⁰ <https://www.instagram.com/p/DLQNiCTRE8i/?igsh=NmM4OWpoa3QxbGZw>

Who to pay for it & how

In order to effectively reach people at a large scale, you will need to spend money on materials like literature, postage, software, voter data, and possibly labor to help accomplish it. It's important that raising and spending money are also done strategically.

One issue from the 2021 race was the time to ask one-time donors to donate more. In order to remedy this, I put more focus on asking people to make small monthly recurring donations, which would spread out a larger donation over several months. Additionally, the limitation of only phone calls for call time seemed arbitrary, so we expanded to also texting and messaging people on social media, as well as sharing fundraising asks on group messaging platforms like Discord or the DSA forum (while within the rules). I also found most people do not react to phone calls or listen to voicemails, so I opted to text people under 50 almost exclusively. Fundraising events were planned to bring in larger portions of funds, but it was critical to minimize costs. As such, we aimed for events with lower/no overhead costs and created a basic run of show for hosts of meet and greet.

Estimations were made on how much fundraising emails and social media got us in 2021 and expanded a monthly amount of what we could raise. Additionally, call time was broken out by a list of donors from previous leftist candidates who I had already known or had contact info on, and broke out estimates on what we could reasonably raise. Finally, we closed the gap on what we needed with how many events we would need to hold in order to raise it.

Budgeting for the campaign was done with a forward and backwards pass of planned expenses and fundraising estimates. First, we wanted to know how many people we needed to contact and by what means. Using estimates on door hanger printing from the 2021 campaign, mail costs and increase to postage, and text rates, we made an initial estimate of \$37k including polling, campaign manager, and print ads. That exceeded our fundraising estimate of \$21k, so working backwards, reduced costs for staff and polling, as well as adjusting the budget for print costs on door hangers to include DIY, we reduced the budget to \$20k.

N	Description	Unit \$	Qty	Est total	Budgeted (\$)	Diff
1	Mailers	0.69	2000	\$1,380.00	1,380.00	\$0.00
2	Yard signs	7.50	200	\$1,500.00	1,500.00	\$0.00
3	Door hangers	0.36	16750	\$6,048.38	5,135.00	\$913.38
4	Palm cards	0.33	4500	\$1,494.96	1,121.22	\$373.74
5	Billboard	200.00		\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
6	Push poll	3,500.00		\$0.00	50.00	-\$50.00
7	Flyers	0.20	300	\$60.00	60.00	\$0.00
8	Merch	6.70	50	\$335.00	485.00	-\$150.00
9	Comms / Graphics			\$0.00	0.00	\$0.00
10	Postage	0.53	1200	\$636.00	636.00	\$0.00
11	Staffing	20.00	100	\$2,000.00	3,000.00	-\$1,000.00
12	Consulting fees			\$14,500.00	0.00	\$14,500.00
13	Fundraising			\$2,000.00	2,000.00	\$0.00
14	Fees	0.05	21,920.00	\$1,846.00	1,140.25	\$705.75
15	Social media buys			\$250.00	249.99	\$0.01
16	Media ads			\$2,000.00	2,000.00	\$0.00
17	Miscellaneous			\$2,000.00	1,200.00	\$800.00
18	Software			\$780.00	1,122.00	-\$342.00
19	Food & Beverage			\$500.00	540.00	-\$40.00
20	Office Supplies/Print			\$100.00	130.00	-\$30.00
	Total			\$37,430.34	20,899.46	15,680.88

Budget by Type

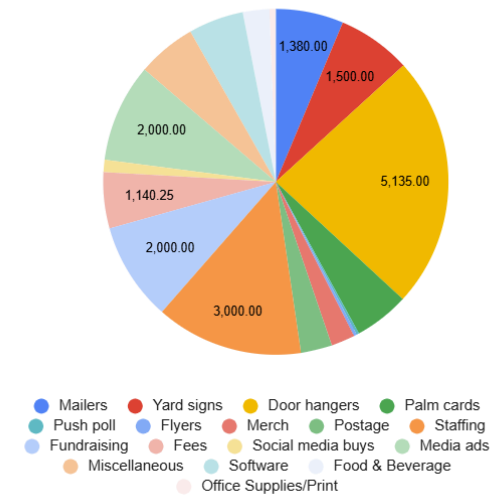


Table of calculated expenses and budgeted expenses, with a pie chart representing budgeted amounts as a whole.

Getting them into DSA

It wasn't enough to mention that I'm in DSA or that I'm endorsed by DSA - I also needed to make sure I asked people to join DSA. It was critical to do this in speeches, in social media, on the volunteer chat, and in email blasts. Pretty much anytime I could make the argument that people needed to be organized (whether that's against the far-right, for starting unions for better wages, etc.) I would mention DSA. This also meant as Membership Chair that I made sure the chapter was able to actually take on new members. Looking at the DSA Growth & Development Committee's documentation, I started to lay out best practices and a bit of a work plan to implement 1:1 calls with new members, more frequent new member orientations, and enhancing the list work spreadsheet to have deeper context around data for different tasks. We made the move from Slack to Discord, and made sure the server was active without too much electoral chatter. A cohort model was recommended and is being implemented in the new year.

Campaign Structure

Architecture and resources

The architecture of the campaign is similar to how the 2021 campaign was run with modifications.

Google Drive: I utilized a free account with Google for a Gmail account, Calendar, Drive for storage, and Sites for the website.

Web domain: Squarespace purchased Google Domains, so the domain name service for the website is with Squarespace now. I created routes and subdomains to redirect to other pages, like join.bob4districta for the volunteer page and donate.bob4districta to the ActBlue donate page with recurring \$25 defaulted.

CRM: I was using Action Network successfully for years. This included forms for yard sign requests, endorsements, and signature pledges. Around June I used my account to create a volunteer signup form for DSA as a sponsor so they had access to signups for volunteers. This broke my account, and I couldn't send emails out anymore. I moved everything over to Mailchimp's free tier, and ran out of emails to send the day before election day.

Social media: I used the Instagram app mostly, with the account linked to the Facebook profile. I also used TikTok sparingly. I used to be a frequent Twitter user, but after the purchase and transition to X, I reduced usage as much as possible. Still, I would post to X and Bluesky occasionally.

Volunteers: I created an Airtable for volunteer signup and management. This had a dropdown of all events for volunteering, as well as custom form for just knocking doors. Volunteer onboarders used Airtable to track who had been onboarded and update any opportunities they wanted to sign up for.

Fundraising: I continued to use ActBlue from my 2021 campaign. I tried using a different service but didn't like their reporting feature or larger transaction fees, so stuck with AB. I was able to create a fund split with two other DSA candidates that raised a decent amount of money. I am using the same bank as I did in 2021.

Internal Communications: In 2021 we used Slack and it was overkill. This time we used Whatsapp with channels for Field Team, Voter Outreach, Comms, and General discussion. The calendar feature was handy but tedious to upkeep. Voice chat worked with small groups, but we moved to Google Meet for campaign calls with larger groups and better screen sharing.

Voter list: Since I was not running as a Democrat, I would not have access to Votebuilder/Minivan. Initially I used Votivate from the Working Families Party for research purposes to gather totals based on their L2 voter data on file. From this, I purchased a list of voters who identified positively with unions, environmental issues, or progressive candidates. WFP eventually locked it down for non-endorsed candidates. The Louisiana Secretary of State sells voter lists but it's expensive and doesn't include much metadata.

I purchased a Good Party Pro account for \$10 to get access to the voter file as an independent candidate. I was able to request a full file that included all the metadata from L2, such as if they're a renter, household income bracket, contribution history, etc. The file was too big for Google sheets importing, so I cut it into multiple parts (main columns of data, and a "meta" sheet with metadata linked to the voter ID).

Voter outreach: Good Party doesn't have a canvassing app or way to cut turf, so I had to either purchase software or come up with a solution on my own. I found an example of a Glide app³¹ for canvassing, so I created one of my own. Glide's premium service that can integrate with Google Sheets was expensive, so I imported data manually from a CSV that I would create from Google Sheets using a query that returned specific voters (like tier 1 in a specific precinct, then all the voters that lived with them) and the Glide app would create a map view and data entry. I built a function that would export all recorded contact into a CSV, and would import and append the file to the Google Sheet with all the voter contact data. From there, formulas updated things like contact count & support level for the voter list that allowed for big picture reporting as well as up to date records on voters.

SMS: Good Party was able to send text blasts as well with a CSV file. I found the turnaround time to be slow, and I wasn't able to have access to their Scale To Win to respond to any replies. I didn't get the data export until 10 days after the campaign. I also had a feature on the Glide app to open the phone app on someone's phone to call or text a voter, which was used for GOTV on election day. I had to create a verification token from a website for \$95.

Canva: What a brilliant little tool for graphics.

Organizing structure

Typical campaigns will have similar organizing structure, with a campaign manager for executive function and a kitchen cabinet for political function.

In 2021 and 2025, I did not elect to have a campaign manager due to cost consideration. Both times I was approached by interested individuals with good track records, and their fee would occupy too much of the budget that it would exceed fundraising capability. My project management skills lent itself to occupying these tasks, and while it took more of my time than fundraising, it also encouraged volunteers to step up when they saw how much I was taking on myself. Delegating tasks became simpler, and helped develop leadership experience for the team.

In my 2021 campaign, I did not have advisors or a kitchen cabinet. In late 2024 I reached out to a number of people who are either politically active or are people close to me who weren't inclined to say "yes" to everything I proposed. We first met before my first campaign event one year before the election. We reviewed my proposed plans, talked over areas that weren't fleshed out like comms schedule or fundraising plan, and reinforced strategic choices. After the event, however, we did not meet due to scheduling conflicts and some members taking on responsibilities in other campaigns.

After the local DSA chapter endorsed my campaign in March, I began to communicate with the chapter in a similar role of a kitchen cabinet. This became a Discord thread that had several

³¹ Dem Labs. <https://thedemlabs.org/2021/09/25/canvas-more-people-from-any-list-with-free-apps/>

members active on it, where I would seek advice or check decisions against others. Sometimes the chapter would step up in its own way, such as the chapter Comms chair who would make videos/posts that included myself or the other candidates. While it was not done through a formal agreement, as a member of the Local Council I was present for leadership meetings and General Meetings to both hear from membership and give updates. This was in line with our endorsed candidate expectations.

Internal campaign structure remained the same: specific team roles like coordinators were defined, volunteers signed up for specific shifts or more general tasks in the future, and group communications were set up for people to organize. There were more people eager to take on volunteer onboarding, which helped get people to turn out for an event or shift. However, we lacked in repeat contact for those that either didn't check the group communications or whose availability changed. We also had people who weren't willing to take on leadership roles but were self-driven to work individually on their own time. While this helped with the field team, it didn't build cohesion or turn out more volunteers for things like events or fundraising.

Execution of campaign

A project charter was written outlining the scope of the campaign, timelines, and phases. Planning for the campaign resulted in a campaign plan on how to execute a field plan, comms, fundraising and more. Further plans were broken out for more details and tracking execution, specifically for field, fundraising, and comms.

The campaign was broken out into 5 phases with time boundaries and distinct deliverables:

- Qualifying (March 11 - July 11): signatures, getting on the ballot
- Persuasion (July 12- Sep 20): campaign materials, speeches and media appearances, endorsements
- GOTV (Sep 21-Oct 11): postcards, texts, and phone calls
- (If applicable) Runoff (Oct 12-Nov 15)
- (If applicable) Transition into office (Nov 15-Jan 11)

Additionally, each phase prior to the runoff would have deliverables of voter contact data including positive IDs and freeform text notes from volunteers, as well as regular emails sent to people who signed up for updates, donated to the campaign, volunteered, or requested a yard sign.

Qualifying phase

In order to get on the ballot for District A, a candidate needs to pay a qualifying fee of \$375 (and another \$375 of running on a ballot line) or collect 1,000 signatures from registered voters between March 11 - June 11. Note that signatures are not an indication of support, so while we were willing to persuade amendable people or record support levels, the main goal was signatures.

First, we laid out precincts to canvass based on the field plan, mostly with precincts near where I lived and targeted ones. We also planned to go to areas of foot traffic like farmers markets. However, life got in the way and I was only able to go to Uptown and Mid City markets a handful of times. Mid City was pretty successful, whereas Uptown wasn't easily navigable due to a new venue & changing layouts. Finally we had volunteers who would also collect signatures on their own time.

We printed a map of the district, along with a list of zip codes in the district and QR codes to the voter portal (to check status and district) and our website to put on the back of the clipboards with the candidate petition. We also created a Google form to act as a survey for people to fill out for what issues mattered to them. We created a basic script and instructed volunteers that joined us. The Glide app was very "alpha", where I would record any issues I ran into and make adjustments as needed. This included things like hiding the pin on the map after it's been knocked, even if other voters are on the list for the address.

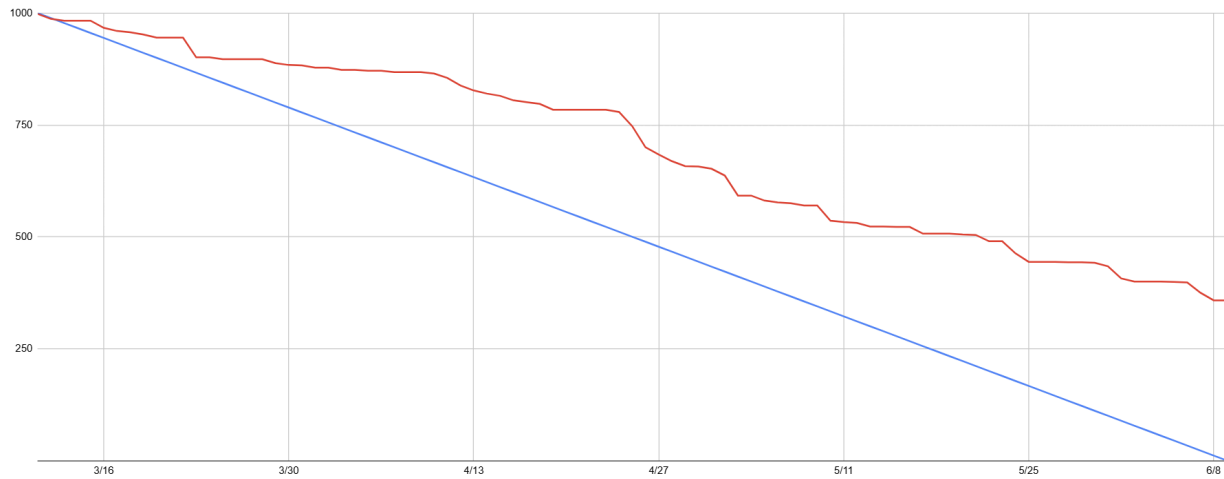
For door hangers, I estimated doing it significantly cheaper if printed and hand cut them myself. I documented the process on a video³², and the door hangers featured relevant info about the campaign with a QR code to the website and my cellphone and email address. Instead of buying additional palm cards to give to people, we opted to use door hangers as our palm cards. Additionally, we purchased business cards with a shortened list of info that we could also hand out.

Dates	Precinct	Neighborhood	Universe(s)	Progressives	High/Supporter	VCut	DCut	DAtter	Att%	VContact	VLitDrop	VAtt	Sigs	D/Sig	Answer%	Total knockers	Shifts done
3/12	04 17	Lakeview	Tier 1	50	32	174	66	63	95%	38	85	123	35	1.80	60.32%	1	1.75
3/13	04 15	Lakeview	X Tier 1	79	26	215	93	77	83%	27	116	143	26	2.96	35.06%	1	1
3/16	17 10	Leonidas	X Tier 1	65	32	188	72	60	83%	15	133	148	14	4.29	25.00%	2	2
3/17	04 17A	Lakeview	Tier 1	30	7	93	33	21	64%	9	32	41	9	2.33	42.86%	1	0.5
3/23	04 09	Navarre	XX Tier 1	160	42	364	161	131	81%	58	190	248	54	2.43	44.27%	3	4
3/29	14 20	Marlyville/Fonta	XX Tier 1	112	132	456	182	35	19%	6	85	91	6	5.83	17.14%	3	2
4/7	04 14	Lakeview	X Tier 1	85	40	276	96	83	86%	38	145	183	36	2.31	45.78%	1	0.75
4/12	05 12	City Park	XX Tier 1	96	129	208	102	91	89%	18	148	166	17	5.35	19.78%	4	4
4/19	03 20	Mid City	X Tier 1	62	67	212	98	50	51%	16	76	92	15	3.33	32.00%	1	1
4/25	17 18A	Lakewood	X Tier 1	63	34	197	78	38	49%	14	64	78	13	2.92	36.84%	1	1
4/26	03 19	Mid City	X Tier 1	155	116	373	123	94	76%	27	149	176	24	3.92	28.72%	4	4
4/27	17 15	Hollygrove	X Tier 1	64	48	237	84	29	35%	9	65	74	9	3.22	31.03%	3	2
5/3	05 15	City Park	XX Tier 1	109	103	334	139	127	91%	43	187	230	39	3.26	33.86%	3	2.5
5/10	06 09	Bayou St John	XX Tier 1	53	70	244	97	75	77%	26	121	147	22	3.41	34.67%	3	3
5/17	07 18	Fairgrounds	XX Tier 1	115	119	308	123	28	23%	28		28			100.00%	1	
5/24	05 12	City Park	XX Tier 1	96	129	118	78	58	74%	15	71	86	14	4.14	25.86%	3	3
5/25	05 09	Bayou St John	X Tier 1	88	58	237	108	59	55%	17	87	104	15	3.93	28.81%	2	1.5
6/7	03 18	Mid City	X Tier 1	153	164	373	171	155	91%	50	251	301	46	3.37	32.26%	5	6
6/1	17 05	Leonidas	XX Tier 1	92	56	272	112	26	23%	8	37	45	7	3.71	30.77%	3	4
6/1	17 07	Leonidas	XX Tier 1	111	60	329	122	73	60%	20	145	165	17	4.29	27.40%	2	0.25
6/8	03 14	Mid City	X Tier 1	65	67	197	97	97	100%	23	152	175	16	6.06	23.71%	3	1.5

A table of shifts for knocking doors to collect signatures. Included are the voters cut for the turf (VCut), doors cut (DCut), doors attempted (DAtter), voters who answered (VContact), total number of voters at doors we left door hangers (VLitDrop), total voters at doors attempted (VAtt), number of signatures collected (Sigs), and doors divided by signatures collected (D/Sig).

³² <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DKsmPgAx37x/?igsh=MWZzYm9pcWNzaHZmdw==>

All told, the field plan for the qualifying phase was completed June 11th, with 642 signatures collected, 934 doors lit dropped covering 2,006 voters, and identified 254 supporters over 32 canvassing shifts and other events.

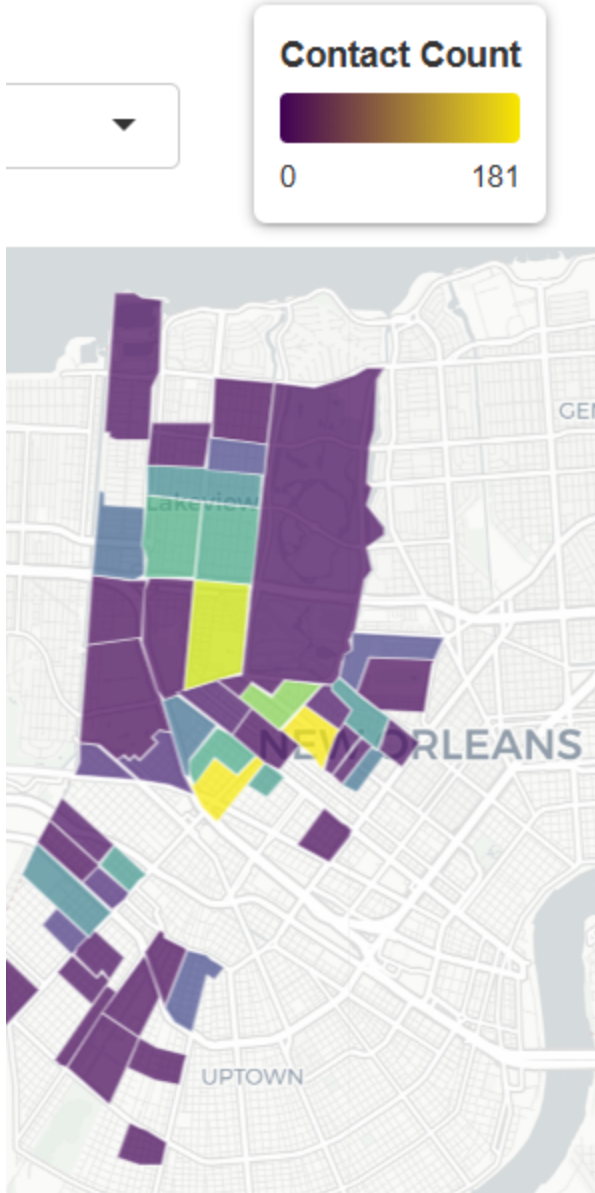


A burndown chart of signatures needed to reach 1,000 and the actual signatures collected.

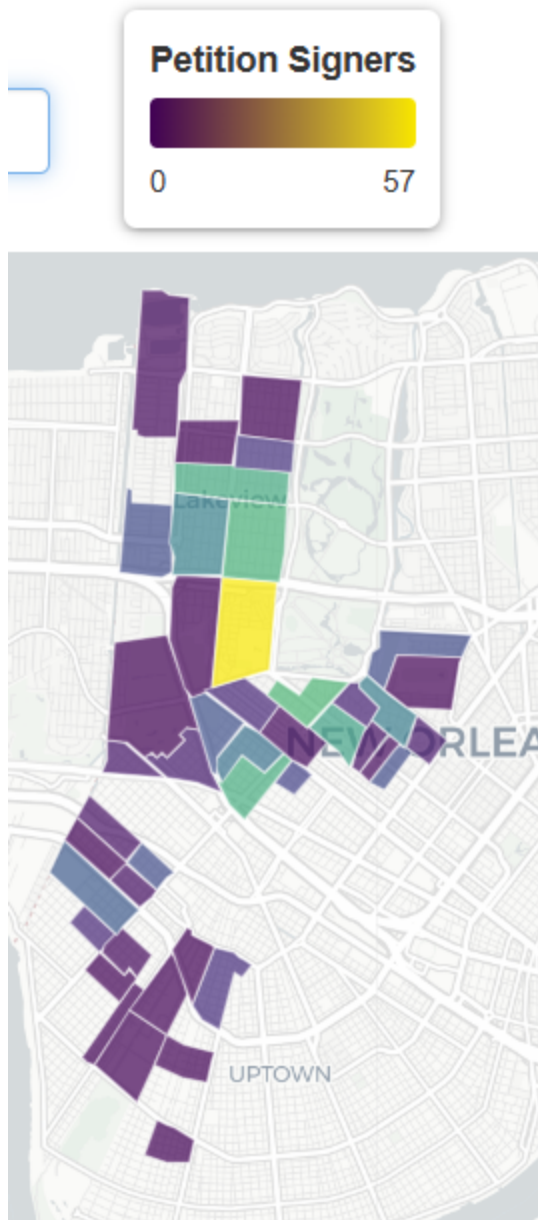
Since I was unable to get the 1,000 signatures needed, I had to pay a qualifying fee of \$375. Thankfully there were enough funds raised to cover this amount.

A volunteer on the campaign did a spatial visualization³³ on canvassing and signature data that occurred from the qualifying phase of the campaign, comparing precincts we expected to have higher preference and projected number of votes compared to voters contacted. Other statistics visualized included contact count and signature count. Note that this contact includes people who we didn't canvass that we contacted or signed the petition, like at a bar or farmer's market, so the precinct reflects where they are registered and not necessarily where we contacted them.

³³ https://zbishop.shinyapps.io/bob_data_analysis/



Visualizations of precinct-level voter contact.



Visualizations of precinct-level signatures collected.

The ActionNetwork email list grew from before the October 2024 fundraiser and steadily grew as people requested yard signs, donated, volunteered, or pledged their signatures.

Date	Sep 11	Nov 11	Jan 11	Mar 11	Jun 11
List Size	143	163	169	182	198

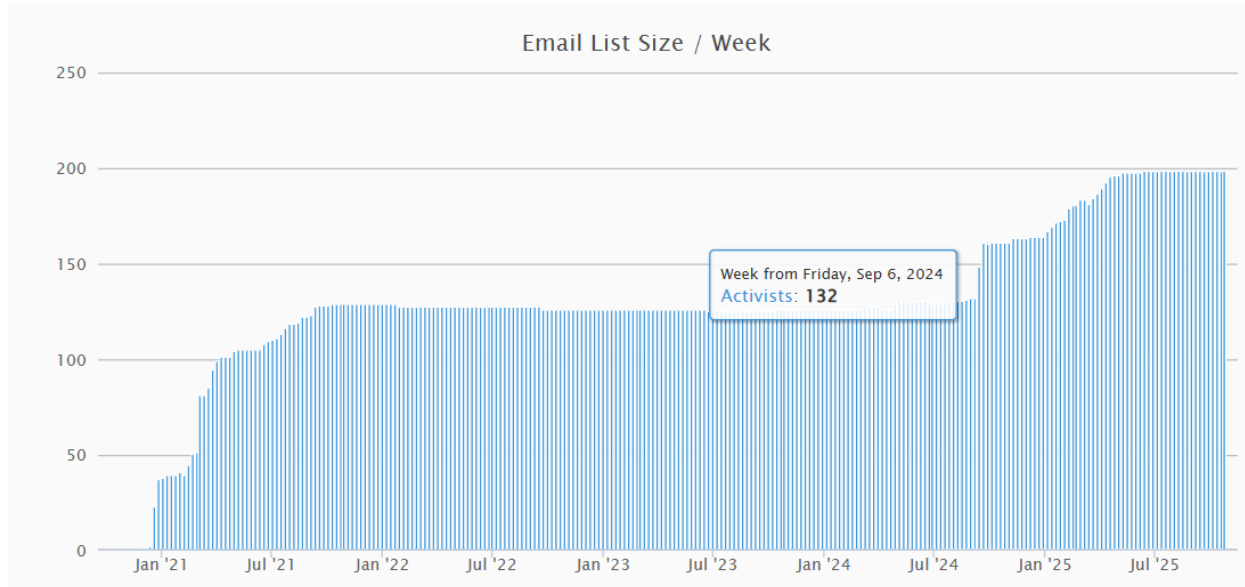


Chart of ActionNetwork email list size. Note that account stopped working at the end of the qualifying phase, peaking at 198.

One thing to note: during this phase, only myself and Democrats Aimee McCarron and Holly Friedman had declared our intent to run. McCarron lives in the West End neighborhood and Friedman in Audubon. These neighborhoods already were low on priority due to a lack of support of leftist candidates and a lack of multiracial working class people, but it's noteworthy the lack of information on the remaining candidates that would run and their bases of support (the boat houses, Navarre, Lakeview, and Mid City).

Persuasion phase

The week before the qualifying phase ended, I realized that the first day of qualifying would be a spectacle with news coverage and social media content creators with an audience that we could reach if possible. I quickly reached out to the other three DSA candidates, the last two previous DSA candidates Gabriela Biro and Devin Davis, and other DSA members that do advocacy work outside of the electoral sphere. We thankfully were all available and planned to speak at the foot of the courthouse right as qualifying started. Each speaker did a wonderful job of articulating different struggles, how capitalism is at fault, and why people needed to join DSA to fight for socialism. Someone who used to do comms for the mayor's office afterwards said that our rally was one of the most eloquent displays of political coherence in this city that he'd seen in a while.

Qualifying ended after three days, and on the last day our chapter hosted a social event/fundraiser, which brought out several allies and comrades, as well as prospective members. I set up an ActBlue donation split that raised a few hundred for the three district candidates. More speeches and networking took place, and all told established a good mood to get the campaign started.

Media appearances and candidate forums are typically scheduled throughout this phase of the campaign. First was the local NBC affiliate that hosts a “Hot Seat debate” that features no seats nor debate. It afforded the candidates 30 seconds introduction and closing remarks, and a number of questions that the host (who lives in District A) feels matters most to the district residents. I used my opportunity on network television to mention revolutionary optimism and my experience as a leader in DSA, and push back on “how well” the incumbent City Council and police chief have been doing. A number of candidate forums invited all the candidates, such as the Urban League’s large forum that was in collaboration with a number of smaller organizations. There were also two large affinity groups - Council on Aging and Together New Orleans - that held large gatherings in the same week that gave me a pretty large audience. I used my opening and closing remarks to continually make the ask for people to get organized with groups including DSA, and to push class conscious answers to the various questions asked.

Questionnaires are another prominent method of persuasion used during this phase, as several groups will ask candidates to answer questions that matter to their members or readers. Publications like Gambit and Verite publish all responses while ANTI GRAVITY features responses worth mentioning in their voter guide. Others use these questionnaires to inform their endorsement, recommendation, score cards, or other public messaging about the campaign. All told 22 questionnaires were responded to with over 26,000 human intelligence generated words in the responses.

In New Orleans, there are minimal standards for neighborhood associations, leading to some being more insular and others more democratic and inclusive. As such, these NA’s are often the only “democracy” residents experience in civic life, making their meetings a prime opportunity to speak to and engage workers who are active in their community. Some will have a dedicated candidate forum while others will have speaking time during their standard monthly meeting. Most are done in person while some only happen online. I attended about a dozen of these NA meetings and was allowed to speak/answer questions at all except one. All told, I felt really confident in my performance at these forums and panels, having a clear political vision both as to why I’m running, who I’m running for, and what we want to do that’s different from the status quo. After these forums, we would attempt to canvass in the neighborhood, and received a lot of positive feedback from those that heard me speak, particularly from Fairgrounds, Bayou St. John, and Mid City.

As the campaign went on and we received more endorsements and feedback from residents, we made changes to the website both to the look and feel (one main front page for scrolling) and some content (pictures of me at political actions, changing “DSA” to “Democratic Socialists of America”, etc.) on the website. As we raised more money, we developed and purchased updated campaign materials with my picture, improved layout of platform & priorities, and a cleaner description of Bob as a leader and as a socialist. A smaller order was made partially because of limited on-hand cash and also assuming that we would receive more endorsements that we could include their graphics on updated literature. The second order of these updated

materials (with logos) was purchased a week before the end of the persuasion phase heading into GOTV.

Social media content was a large part of this phase, with several videos and posts surrounding issues we discussed with residents, such as questions about Trump, Landry, and ICE³⁴. Additionally, some supporters who are content creators independently made their own videos³⁵ about the campaign and why they supported it. The chapter social media account would also post videos³⁶ from candidate forums and add the campaign account as a collaborator, which proved to drive traffic to the campaign website and to the DSA account.

Endorsement processes ran throughout this phase of the campaign, some at much different speeds and levels of democracy, and resulted in a number of meetings. Groups that are typical coalition partners with DSA, such as Step Up and VOTE, were endorsements that were valued very highly by me that wouldn't be contested by the other candidates. Smaller paper endorsements like Sierra Club, 3.14 Action Fund, and Run For Something required little effort and were also not contested. Some organizations had delayed endorsement processes, such as the Working Families Party that is still trying to establish itself in Louisiana.

There are some endorsements that I did not pursue, such as Alliance for Good Governance or the Republican Party, or was not allowed to pursue because I ran as an independent, such as the local Democratic Party OPDEC and the Independent Women's Organization. Lead Locally opted to not make an endorsement for District A in spite of Democrats running, apparently due to not wanting to hurt my campaign.

The Greater New Orleans AFL-CIO endorsement process is something that should be more closely scrutinized, as none of the DSA candidates secured union endorsements because none of the individual unions that are members of AFL-CIO can make their own endorsements that go against whatever the AFL-CIO makes as a whole. First, there is no public documentation on their process. I had to both email and call the secretary and the president to ensure that I was even included in the proceedings. Next, I had to attend an interview where I was given 4 questions (only one of which mentioned unionization) inside a ballroom with no microphone. During my introduction, I mentioned that I was the most pro-union candidate you'd find on the ballot and I wanted to double their membership size by actively encouraging and supporting organizing efforts. This apparently was not enough to sway the majority white unions whose questions had more of a focus on economism and quality of life matters around more middle class residents. The union made a dual endorsement for the two centrist Democrats with existing connections to the outgoing incumbent.

The National DSA endorsement process is something that is actually documented, and as a rank and file member of the National Electoral Commission, I've seen what campaigns were previously endorsed and how they navigated the process. The discussion around both the

³⁴ https://www.instagram.com/reel/DNjEi0QRfq_/

³⁵ <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DPB6S8OjayJ/>

³⁶ <https://www.instagram.com/reel/DNtMWZrWkYL/>

NEC³⁷ recommendations and the final NPC vote³⁸ are available on the DSA forums. For the sake of those who are not DSA members (join already), the gist of the NEC's decision to not recommend endorsement was surrounded by incorrect statements around my website and materials not having the word "socialism" featured and that my field plan's voter universe wasn't large enough (which was misrepresented by a caucused NEC SC member in their report to NEC SC). The NPC's decision to not endorse was nearly split (just one vote off from passing), which featured at the time of this writing the highest vote participation in any NPC decision on Loomio so far, and has been categorized as a factional dispute moreso than an earnest vote on my campaign. Various NPC members representing different political tendencies gave contradictory reasons for opposition, many of which are not even standards passed by the National Convention (including that I wasn't inspiring enough).

After the qualifying phase, we used the visualizations on canvassing data to tweak which precincts we'd target earlier or whichever ones had more volunteers signed up. We had double digit volunteers sign up in both August and September, and continued to knock doors every weekend. In late September, we also included days in the afternoon that I could bike/scoot to around Mid City, Navarre, Bayou St. John, and the Fairgrounds to do second and third passes. We held a phonebank night with volunteers to either get people who signed up to volunteer to show up to some specific shifts, and volunteers who were DSA members called DSA members in the district to recruit them to volunteer. This didn't yield many signups, but did spark interest among chapter members who weren't engaged and didn't know we had City Council candidates running.

After moving to MailChimp, we continued to see a steady growth of the list size as people requested yard signs, donated, or signed up for updates.

Date	Jun 11	July 11	Aug 11	Sep 11	Oct 11
List Size	198	219	257	285	312

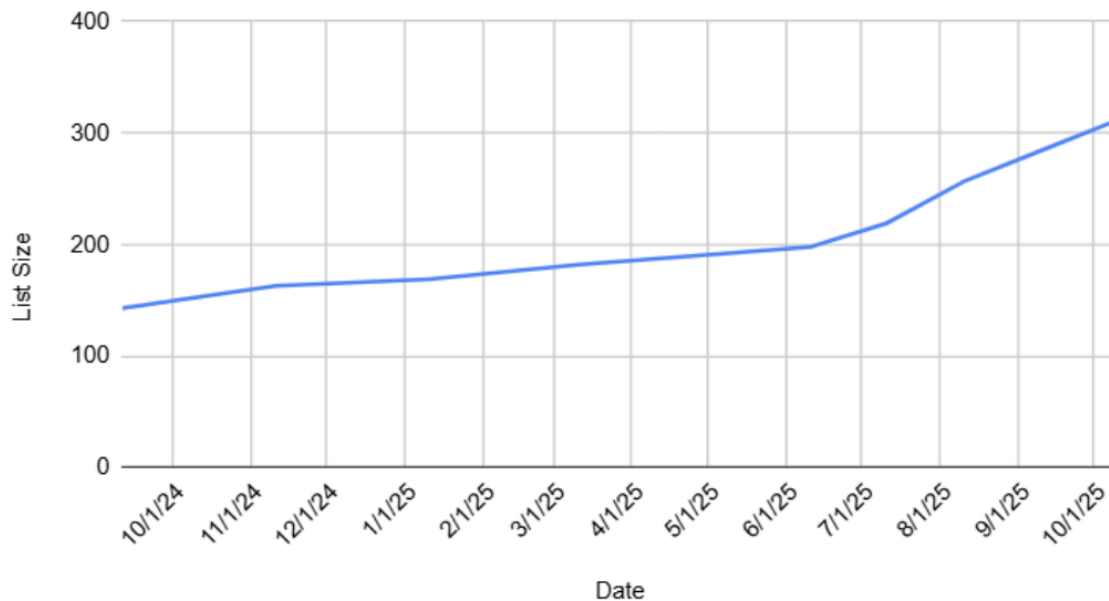
37

<https://discussion.dsausa.org/t/voicing-dissent-towards-the-nec-decision-on-the-national-endorsement-of-bob-murrell-for-new-orleans-city-council/51285>

38

<https://discussion.dsausa.org/t/failure-to-uphold-a-partyist-vision-red-star-on-the-npc-s-first-endorsement-decision/51964>

Email List Size



A graph showing email list size over time.

GOTV phase

Get out the vote (GOTV) is in many ways an agile scrum spike, where it's all hands on deck to drive out turnout. The common belief around GOTV in New Orleans is that most voters either have not made their minds up or are uninformed about the election until right before early voting begins for early voters and the week leading up to election day. Opponents spent a lot on mailers and yard signs, and my household received 6 pieces of mail from two District A opponents on the same day - 4 of them 8"x11" pieces from Holly Friedman each with different campaign materials on them. Phonebanking and textbanking aren't usually used, but there was an uptick in texts sent by opponents as well.

For our part, we sent out one mailer to 2,000 residents, hundreds of hand-written postcards from volunteers, and election day phone calls and texts done manually using the campaign's Glide App. Additionally, text blasts were sent out using the Good Party's platform to thousands of voters. The week leading up to election day saw an increase in volunteer signups, particularly for literature drops where the volunteer doesn't knock just leaves a door hanger. This was crucial to get to targeted precincts we still had not attempted yet in low-turnout areas.

Social media included two filmed reels from my campaign that were boosted on Meta's platform (Facebook and Instagram). This had a pretty solid response in terms of visibility and engagement.

Election Day activity was pretty high across all volunteers to the point where I did not knock doors on Election Day because all of the literature was taken by volunteers to door knock and lit

drop. Instead I spent the day with my family waving signs, calling and texting, and going to the DSA watch party.

Results

All told, we were able to hit all the targeted precincts once either with canvassing or lit drops, reached 69.64% of fundraising goal, and spent 66.54% of budgeted expenses.

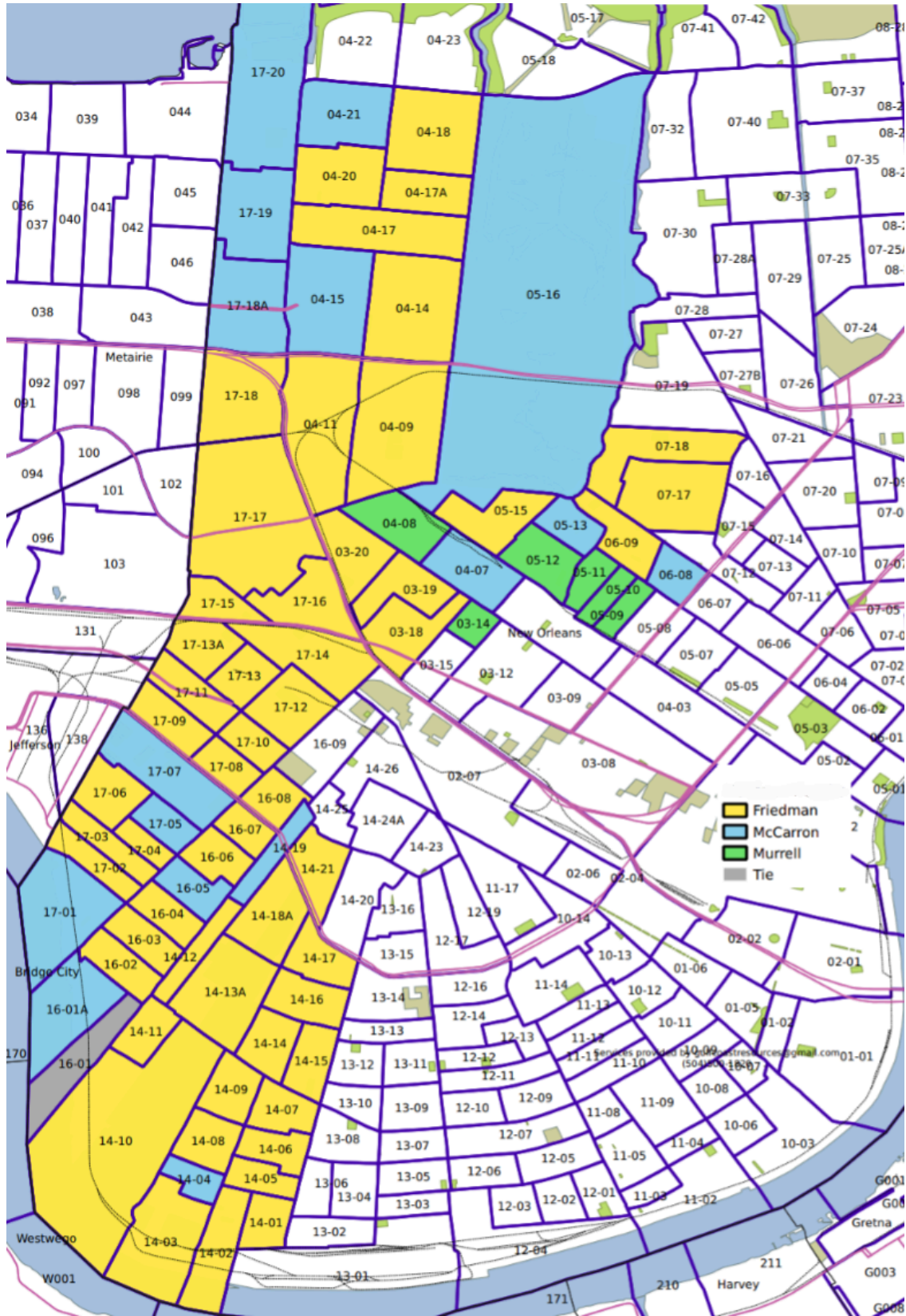
Anxiety towards Trump and Landry wound up being the most common issue I heard from people knocking doors - not streets or crime. Neighborhood forums also received large audible support whenever I brought up the fight for democracy, ICE and National Guard deployments, and against fascism (with only one person telling me "ease up on the fascism stuff"). This appears to have been a correct talking point to elevate around raising political awareness and movement building, and may have been a large contributor to electoral results.

Electoral results

We finished 3rd overall with 3,002 votes (13.54%), which was the highest number of votes for an independent City Council District candidate since the five districts were created seventy years ago. Turnout was significantly higher than anticipated (42% vs 29%), most likely from the late surge in spending on the mayoral & sheriff races and the increase in turnout of older white conservative voters in District A appears to have pushed the edge to Helena Moreno (the white mayoral frontrunner) and Michelle Woodfork (sheriff candidate and former police chief) to avoid a runoff. These top-ballot races had significantly more votes than the precinct-level election day votes, which would indicate not many low info voters voted the whole ballot including District A.

The criteria used for previous left candidates and ballot measures can also be applied to compare against top ballot City-wide races that were also on the ballot for Pastor Gregory Manning (DSA endorsed City Council candidate), Calvin Duncan and Casius Pealer, and the HRC "fair chance" amendment (DSA recommended and VOTE endorsed).

Precinct-level results aren't available for early voting, but Election Day District A results compared to Bob show 276 more votes for Pastor Manning (24% in District A), 1929 more votes for Casius Pealer (35%), 3,624 more votes for Calvin Duncan (51%), and 5,192 more votes for the Fair Chance HRC amendment (67%). Some patterns can be pulled on precinct level disparities but none of the Citywide races had the same criteria as District A (open race, multiple parties on the ballot, 5 options).



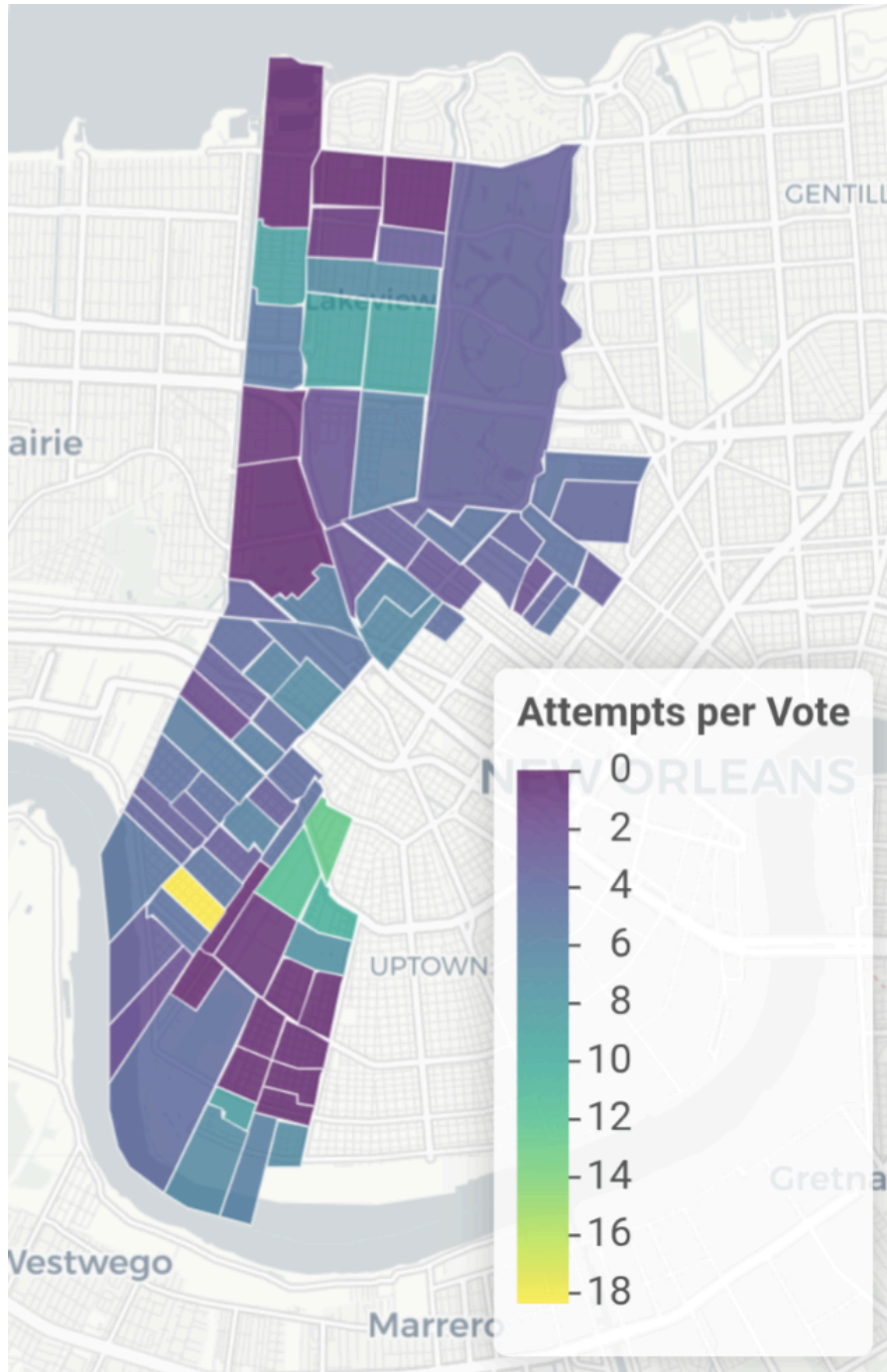
Precinct-level map highlighting candidates who received the highest amount of votes on election day. Murrell is in green.

As of: 10/12	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct
New Volunteers	2	4	5	3	9	8	3	10	11	4
Total Volunteers	6	10	15	18	27	35	38	48	59	63
Shifts Volunteered			5	4	11.5	11.75	8	19	9	12
Total Shifts	0	0	5	9	20.5	32.25	40.25	59.25	68.25	80.25
Voters contacted	7	6	110	186	192	100	44	136	156	144
Total contacted	7	13	123	309	501	601	645	781	937	1081
Voters lit dropped			458	645	557	346	491	781	1132	4371
Total lit dropped		0	458	1103	1660	2006	2497	3278	4410	8781
Voters attempted	7	6	568	831	749	446	535	917	1288	4515
Total attempted	7	0	568	1399	2148	2594	3129	4046	5334	9849
Doors lit dropped			202	297	271	164	205	363	521	1753
Total doors lit dropped		0	202	499	770	934	1139	1502	2023	3776
Signatures collected			117	226	214	85				
Total signatures			117	343	557	642				
Positive IDs	4	17	32	54	63	29	40	46	58	54
Total Positive IDs	59	76	108	162	225	254	294	340	398	452

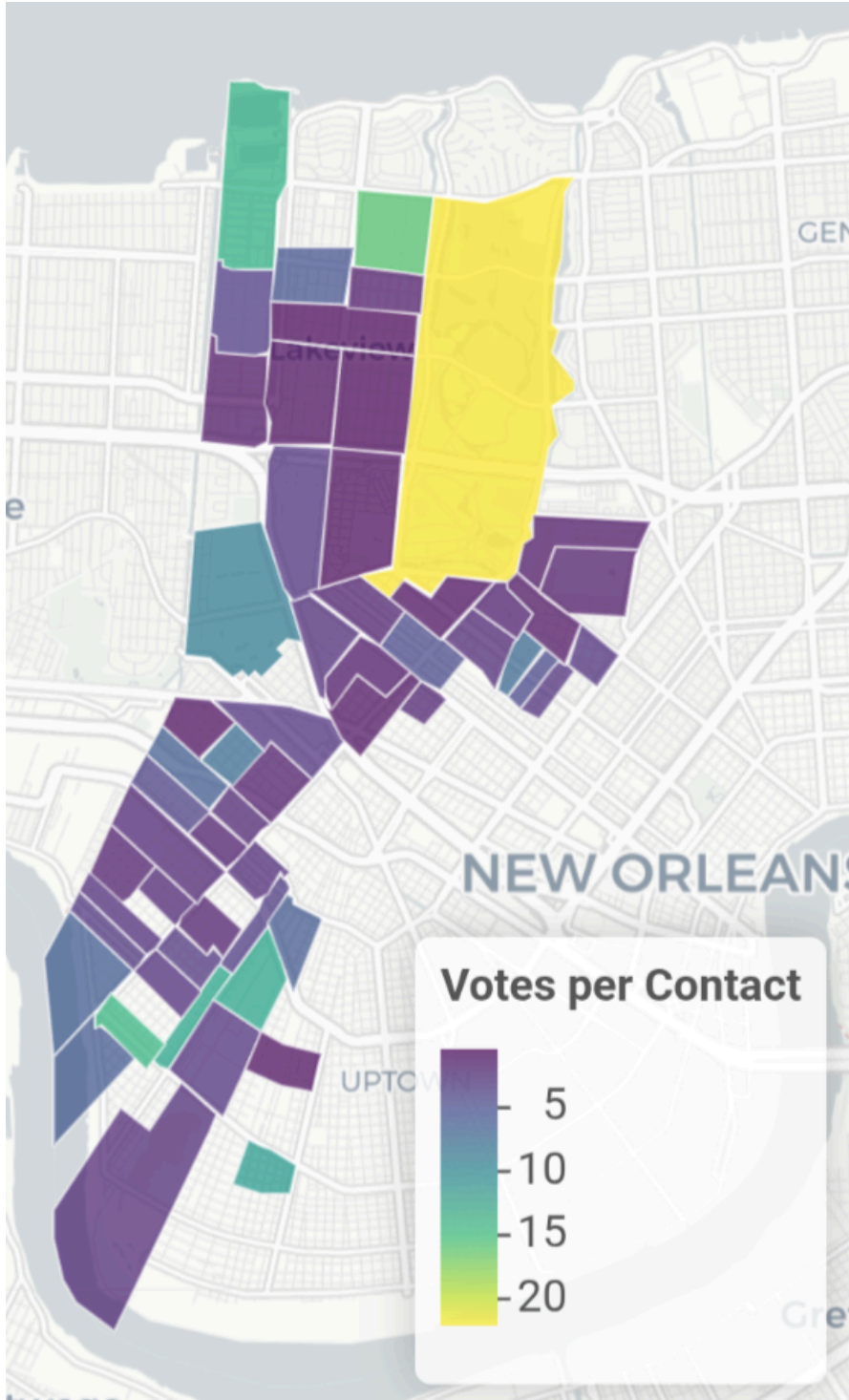
Table of monthly and cumulative data on volunteers and field plan execution.

In spite of higher attempts for contact, some precincts did not vote at rates anticipated for our independent campaign, perhaps a flaw in methodology that was agnostic to election conditions and assuming enough Democrats voters would be willing to ignore the ballot line in favor of the candidate. This appears to be the case for some precincts in Navarre, Leonidas, and Hollygrove, where in spite of historical performance of leftist candidates and direct contact made, the results favored the centrist Democrats.

This evidence runs counter to the strategy laid out by the national electoral staffer and reformists on the DSA right - there was no consistent correlation between attempts and votes or contacts and votes in various geographic areas.

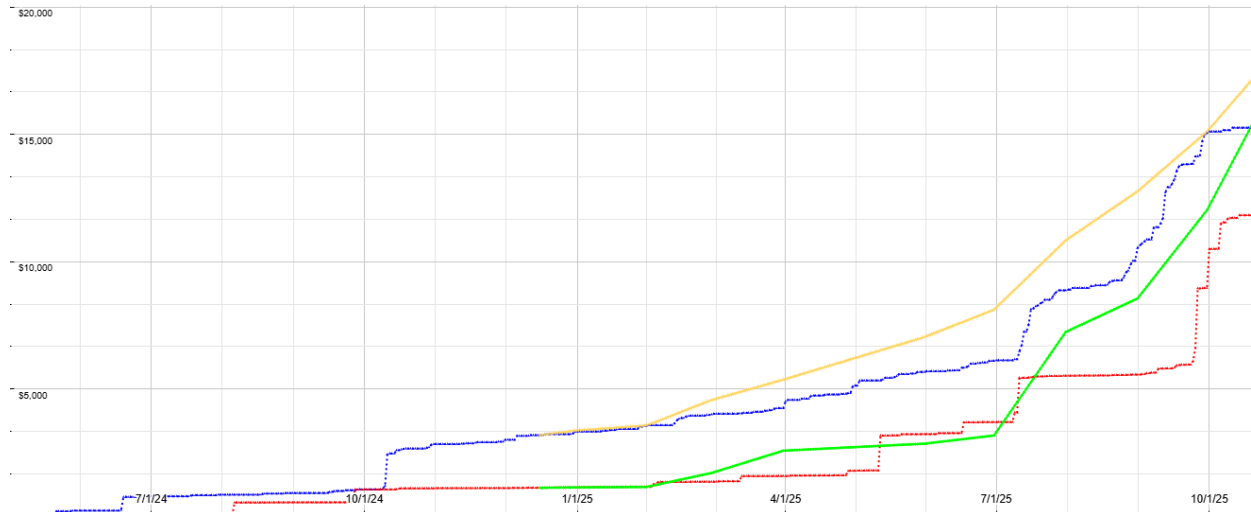


Visualizations of precinct-level attempts to contact divided by votes cast



Visualizations of precinct-level votes divided by contact made.

Fundraising results



Graph showing fundraising and spending over time, ending on election day. Blue is actual raised, red is actual spent. Yellow is the budgeted fundraising targets and green is the budgeted expenses (distributed for the month at a linear rate).

In total we raised \$15,266 from 194 individuals with a median donation of \$25. Every donation was categorized into a number of referral sources either using refcodes in ActBlue or from interactions that we attributed a contribution to a reference. Chat represented the largest source. This can mostly be attributed to DSA National Forums and the #bobchallenge after the NEC and NPC rejected the national endorsement. This also includes various Discord channels where the website was shared. Website referrals are mostly unattributed digital fundraising, and call time had only 12 attributed donations. Recurring donors in total accounted for \$2,680 (18% of total donations) and 104 DSA members from across the country accounted for \$8,163 total (53% of total donations).

Median:	\$25		Reference:	\$	#	Avg
Mean:	\$45		Chat	\$5,136.67	63	\$81.53
Max:	\$1,000		Recurring	\$2,221.68	98	\$22.67
Min:	\$1		Social media	\$1,923.00	33	\$58.27
			Event	\$1,820.00	34	\$53.53
Donors:	194		Email	\$1,075.00	25	\$43.00
Count:	335		Website	\$1,072.34	18	\$59.57
Total \$	\$15,266		Merch	\$663.00	27	\$24.56
< \$50	265	79%	Cold Call	\$645.00	6	\$107.50
>= \$500	5	1%	Prev Donor Call t...	\$390.00	5	\$78.00
			Meet & Greet Event	\$294.02	26	\$11.31
			Prev Donor Text	\$25.00	1	\$25.00

Table of fundraising data categorized by referral source and cumulative numbers.

	\$	#	Avg		\$	#	Avg
Recurring	\$2,680	18	\$24	DSA	\$8,163	104	\$78
% Recur	18%	9%		% DSA	53%	54%	
	\$	#	Avg		\$	#	Avg
<u>By State</u>				<u>In the District/City</u>			
LA	\$6,293	154	\$41	70119	\$2,232.00	37	\$60.32
CA	\$3,178	54	\$59	70124	\$1,897.00	40	\$47.43
NY	\$587	14	\$42	70115	\$810.02	9	\$90.00
IL	\$463	10	\$46	70118	\$800.00	26	\$30.77
FL	\$407	8	\$51	70117	\$581.67	22	\$26.44
TX	\$286	12	\$24	70122	\$565.00	9	\$62.78
WI	\$100	1	\$100	70116	\$380.01	9	\$42.22
WA	\$71	3	\$24	70125	\$218.00	6	\$36.33
ME	\$50	1	\$50	70131	\$125.00	2	\$62.50
PA	\$50	1	\$50	70114	\$100.00	1	\$100.00
MO	\$50	2	\$25				
NE	\$50	2	\$25				
IN	\$42	3	\$14				
VA	\$36	3	\$12				
NC	\$25	1	\$25				
GA	\$25	1	\$25				
TN	\$25	1	\$25				
NJ	\$25	1	\$25				
CT	\$25	1	\$25				
NH	\$15	1	\$15				
OR	\$5	1	\$5				
CO	\$1	1	\$1				

Table of fundraising data for recurring donations, DSA members, by state and zip code. Blue zip codes include District A.

Recruitment results

The national DSA Membership Numbers by Chapter shows 98 new members between March and October 2025. Here is a breakdown of the members that joined by ZIP code and the total in Orleans Parish during the course of the campaign.

	Before	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total	Added	Increase
Members	325	8	7	6	11	13	16	18	19	423	98	30.15%
70118	15	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	3	22	7	46.67%
70119	63	1	1	1	0	1	3	2	5	77	14	22.22%

70124	12	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	17	5	41.67%
Orleans Parish	262	6	5	5	10	9	12	12	18	339	77	29.39%

77 of the joins are in addresses within the City of New Orleans. 26 of the new members during the endorsement campaign (34%) have ZIP codes that cover the vast majority of District A (70124, 70118, 70119).

Conclusions

If we run an independent socialist campaign that identifies and targets multiracial working class people, pushes class conflict, uplifts the DSA program and encourages people to join DSA, then we can increase political awareness through campaign materials, find areas where DSA's candidates and program are popular, and recruit people to DSA.

Did we successfully test the hypothesis? Let's look at the deliverables:

- The volume of campaign materials & awareness of them
- Locations where DSA candidates and program are popular
- Number of people who joined DSA

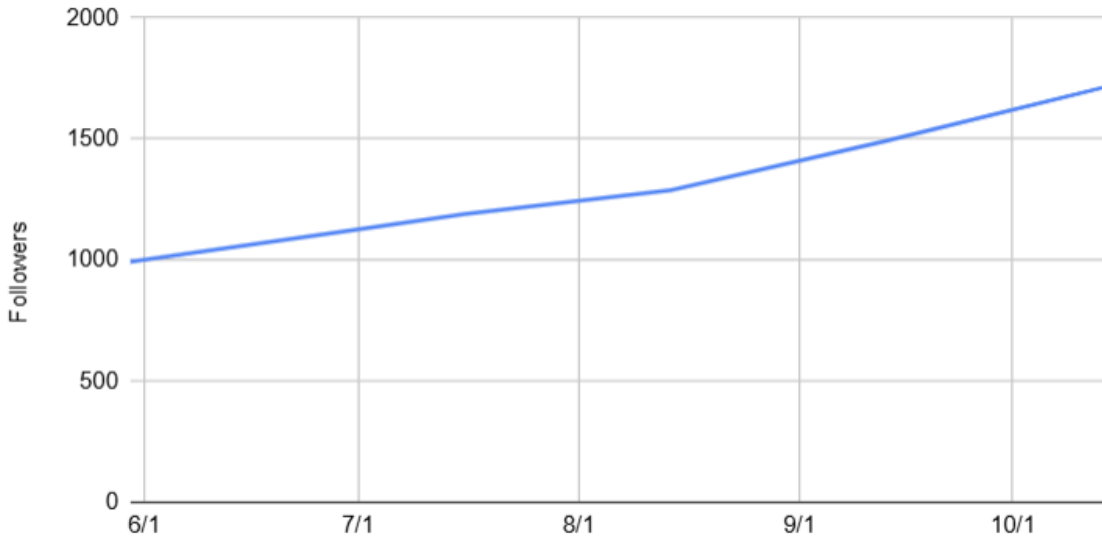
We can explore the deliverables and see how they contributed to the overall success of the campaign through the aggregate of probabilities over time:

Hypothesis	Probability	Results
Increase political awareness through campaign materials	P_a (Awareness)	197K Instagram views 42% answer support rate 13,445 pieces of campaign materials distributed
Find areas where DSA candidates and program are popular	P_v (Votes)	3,002 votes (3rd place, 13.54%) Six 1st place precincts Nine 2nd place precincts
Recruit people to DSA	P_m (Movement)	98 new members

Increasing Political Awareness

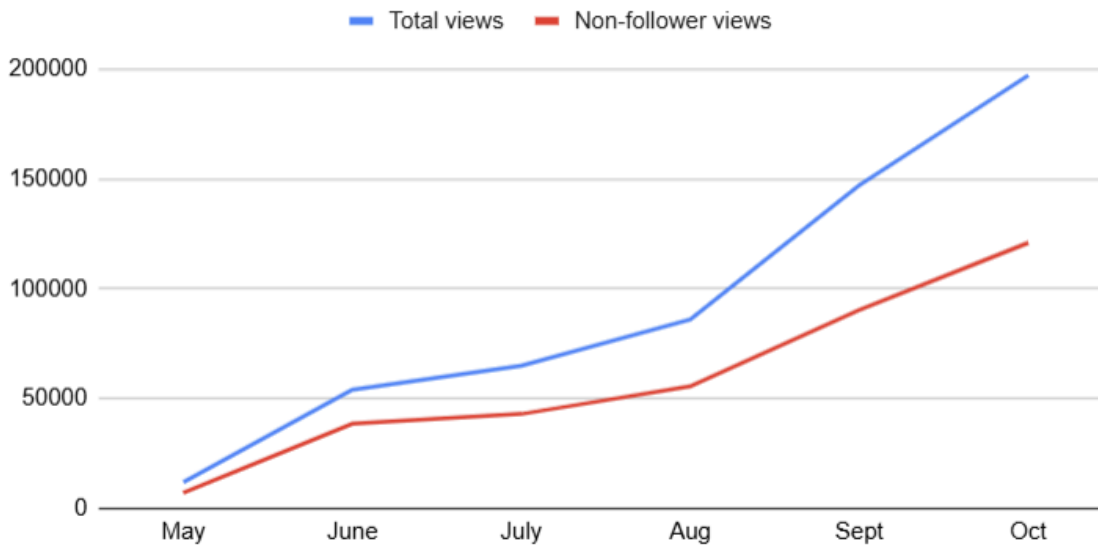
Instagram was used as the primary propaganda platform for the campaign, featuring information graphics and videos of political speeches, interviews, and profiles. This content had over 197 thousand views from users, 61% of which did not follow the campaign account.

Followers over time



Graph showing cumulative Instagram followers

Views over time

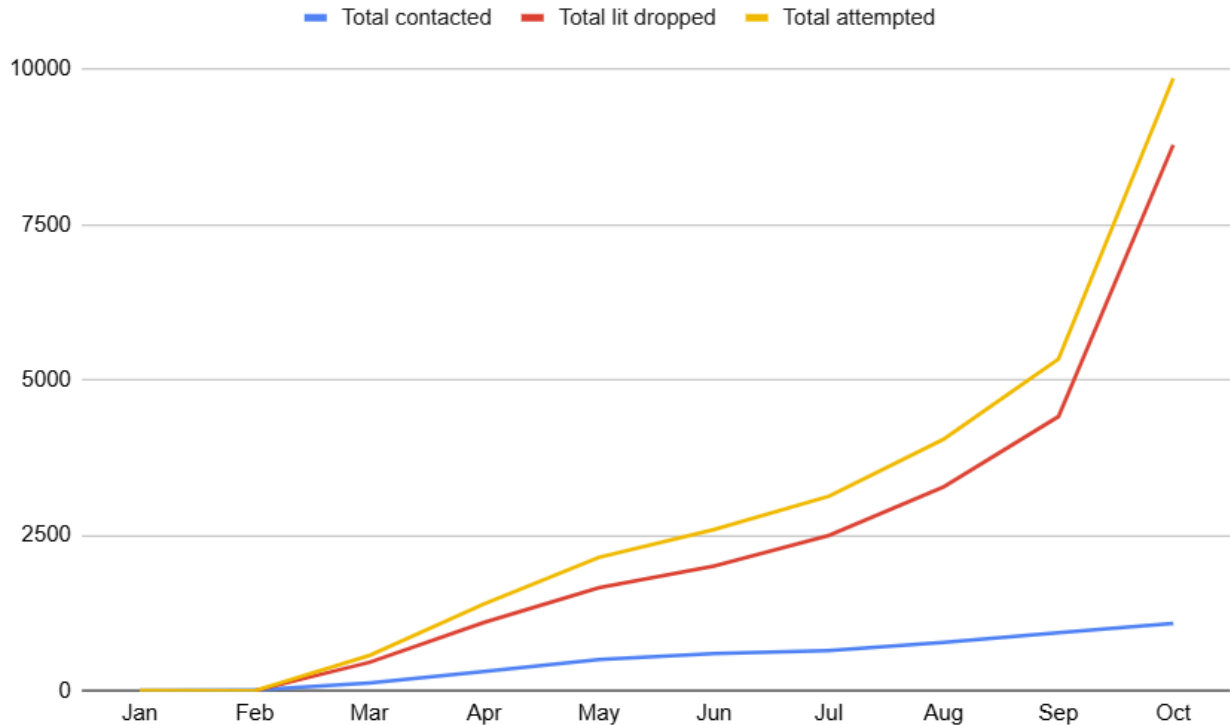


Graph showing cumulative Instagram views in total and for non-followers

Additionally, my reputation as “the socialist candidate” was not met with derision or aggression but with engagement and dialog. Of the 23% of people that answered their doors, 42% of them indicated support for the socialist candidate with a “Democratic Socialists of America” graphic right next to his face. There were 4,520 door hangers printed and distributed, 6,616 text messages blast, 309 manually sent texts, and 2,000 pieces of mail sent to over 4,300 people with leftist slogans like “People First” and the DSA logo. All told, 10,493 voters were attempted

with campaign literature across the district and most prominently in multi-racial working class precincts.

Voter Contact over time

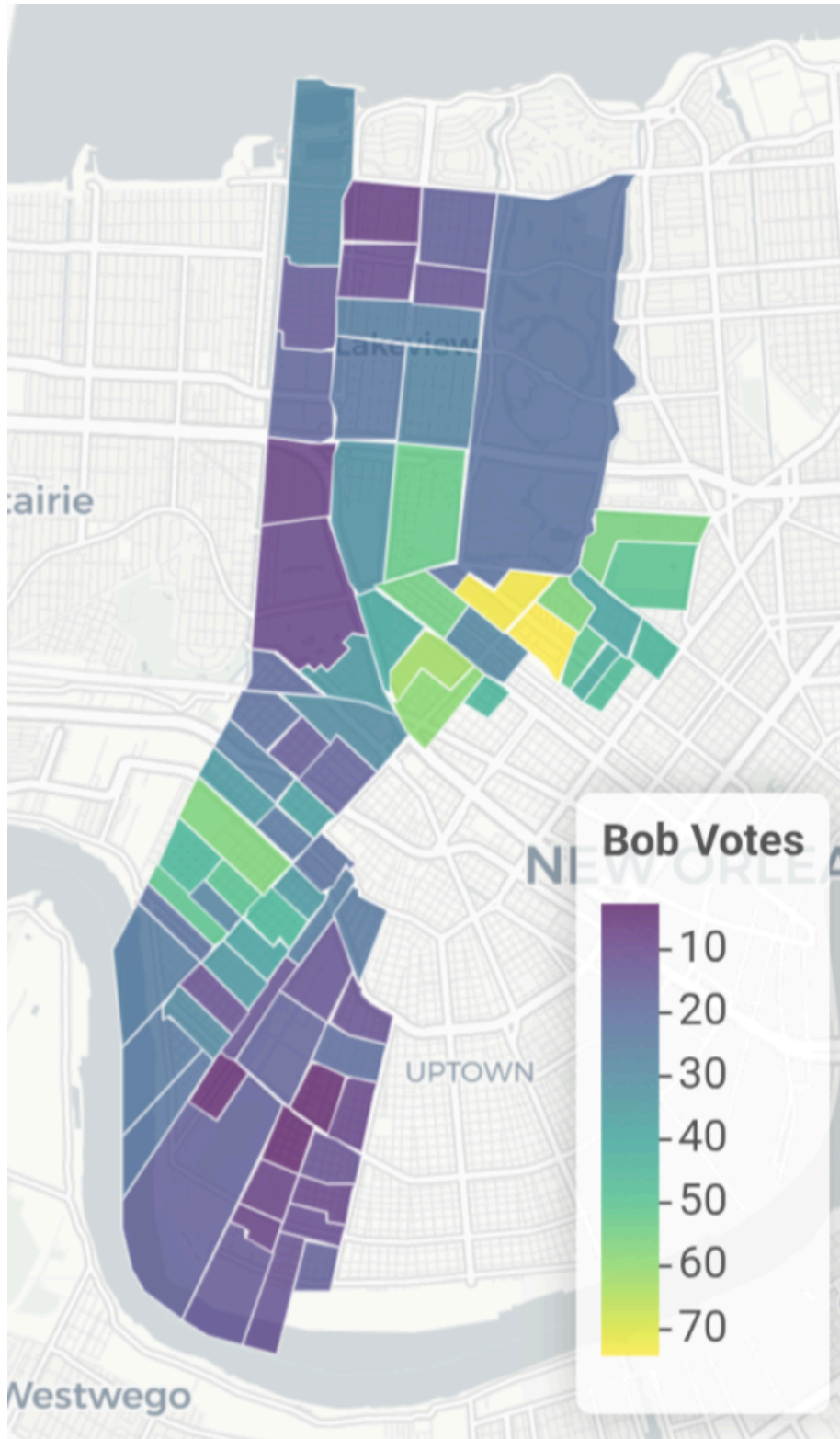


Graph showing cumulative direct voter contact from our field plan (either answered or lit dropped)

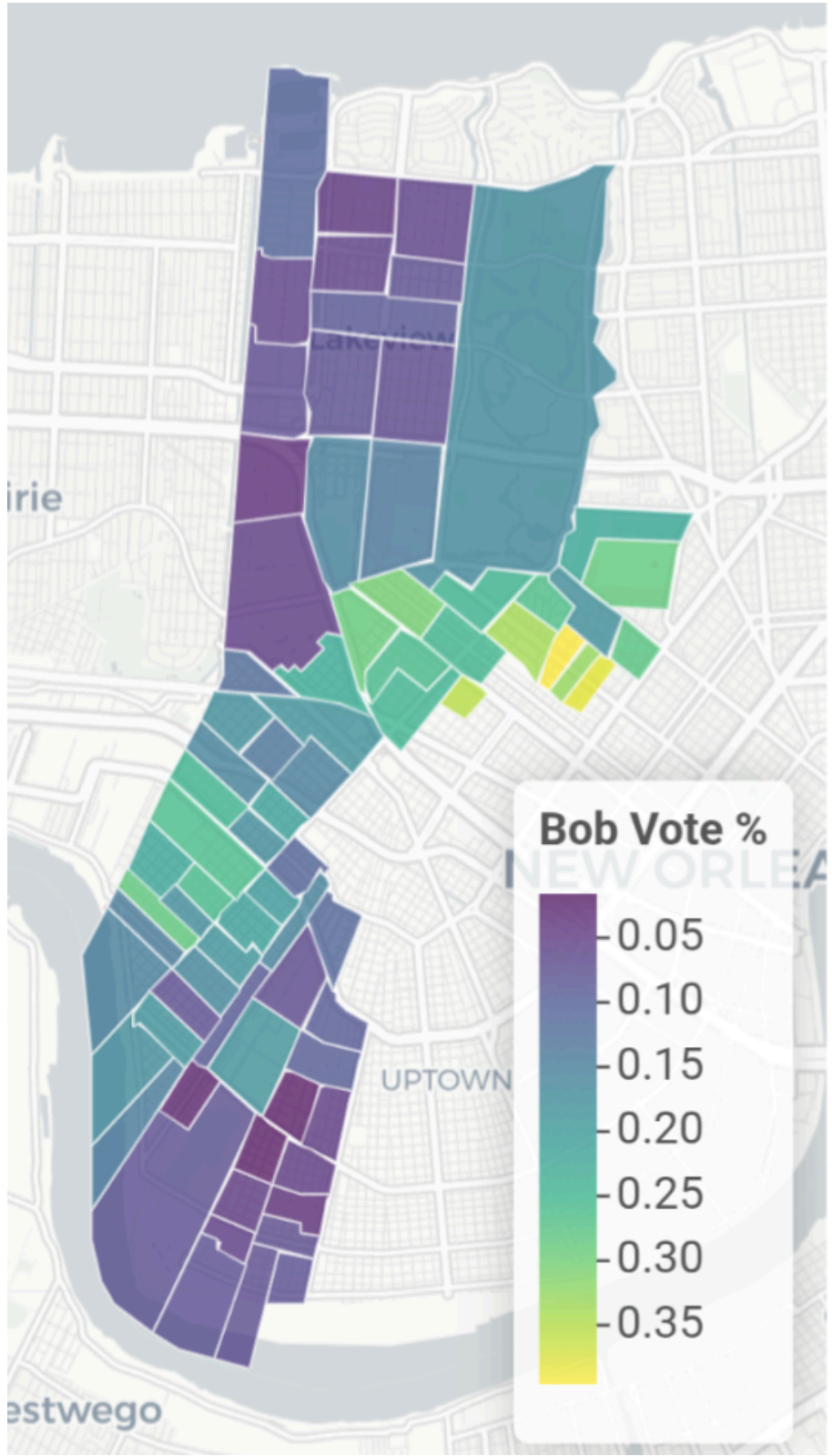
Hundreds of positive IDs at doors and hundreds of thousands of views and followers represent the accumulation of positive probability over the course of the campaign timeline. Each action (social media posts, campaign literature handed to a person) contributed to heightened political awareness.

Find Where We're Popular

The campaign directly identified almost 500 people who supported the campaign that can be contacted for further followup and recruitment. Over 3,000 people voted for an independent socialist, with six precincts claiming 1st place and nine more in 2nd place. There hasn't been a district City Council race where an independent candidate received more than 3,000 votes since the 1954 Home Rule Charter established the five districts.



Visualizations of precinct-level total votes.

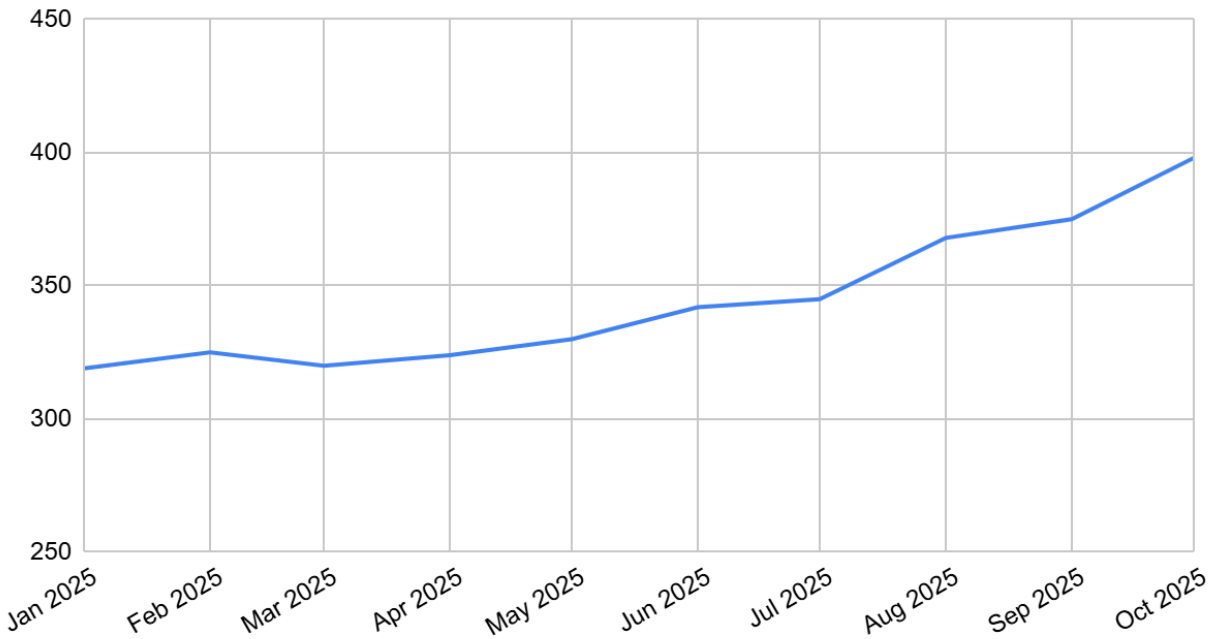


Visualizations of precinct-level vote percentage.

Recruit People to DSA

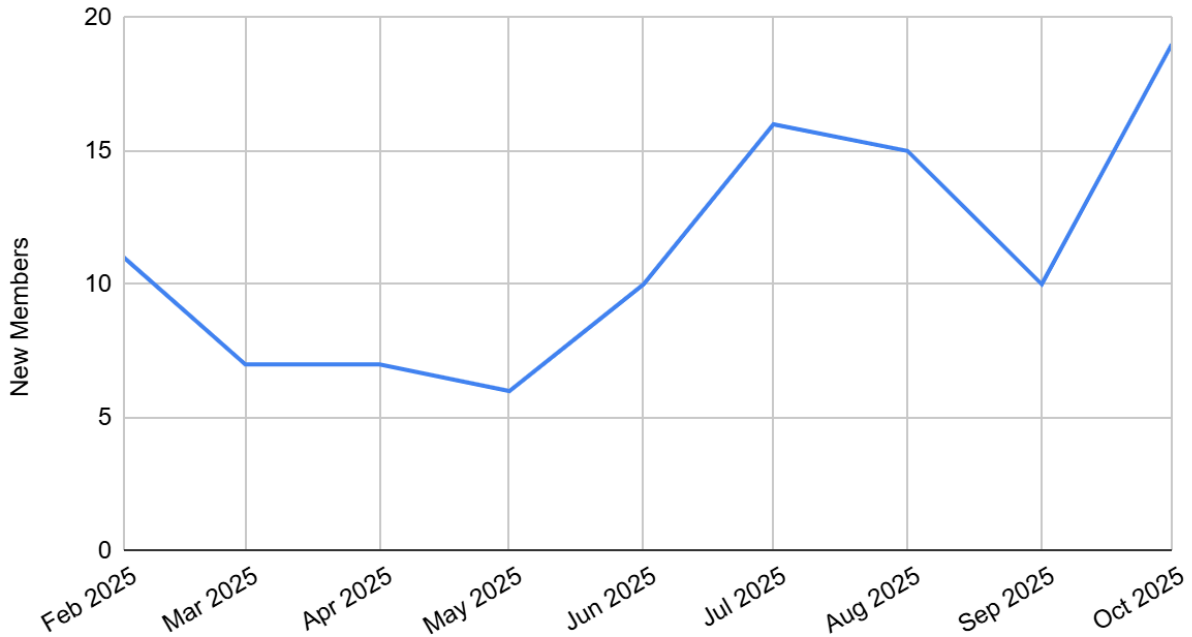
Between March to October 2025, the chapter saw ninety eight new members join DSA. Seven volunteers on the campaign joined DSA or renewed their dues, and multiple new DSA members in District A indicated that they joined after being canvassed for the campaign or hearing about it on social media. At least twenty six members who joined from March to October 2025 are in zip codes covering District A.

Members in Good Standing at end of month



A graph showing the total number of members in good standing at the end of each month in 2025.

New Members each month



A graph showing the total number of new members who joined each month in 2025.

A sharp increase in both new members and members in good standing began to occur in July, when qualifying occurred and our social media began sharing more content on the candidates, including the qualifying rally speeches. All told, double-digit new members occurred every month from June to the end of the campaign, with a 24.76% growth in MIGS from passage of the City Council strategy resolution to the end of the campaign.

The 98 new DSA members represent the accumulated probability over the campaign timeline. Each recruitment action (canvassing asks to join, social media posts asking to join, emails asking people to join) contributed incremental increases towards movement building and growing the DSA chapter.

Political conclusions

My political development as a “cadre” member of the local chapter easily anchored the campaign to the chapter and its membership. Compared to other campaigns that have sought chapter endorsement, including other DSA candidates in the same cycle, our campaign was not only driven towards amplifying the work and priorities of the chapter, but made joining DSA a critical path for supporters and elevated class consciousness of voters contacted regardless of support. New Orleans DSA before the campaign looked different after the campaign, one that was more recognized by average voters and class enemies who saw its growing political presence as a challenge.

This campaign operated within a fundamental tension: using DSA as the vehicle for party-building while navigating a national environment often hostile to the Marxist electoral theory that guided the effort. The recommended centrality of electoralism to the operations of a local DSA chapter is a political choice, one that was not made by our local chapter and its members, national DSA or the National Convention, or even the NEC rank and file, but recommended by an unelected employee of DSA paid by the dues of its members in good standing. Despite the volume of data collected and experience with chapters across the country documented and demonstrated, there weren't readily available resources like example scripts available for all the ways we were instructed to interact with DSA members and with voters like canvassing and phonebanking scripts or fundraising emails. This is in contrast with open member-led national bodies like the Growth and Development Committee working collaboratively across the country to collect and distribute resources created and developed by chapters including scripts, slidedecks, forms and more. In growing DSA as a political party, it's incumbent that DSA "let members cook" on developing a consistent electoral program across the country that is still adaptable to local conditions and has a participatory character.

This one-way relationship was a barrier that I found challenging throughout the process both as a candidate and an NEC member. Misalignment came up multiple times, whether through the confusion of "win number" for jungle primaries, targeted voters versus targeted doors, and that the chapter itself was not running the campaigns but acting in support of the campaigns³⁹. This reflects a contradiction in national DSA's identity and how it operates practically versus theoretically. Is it an independent party-in-formation? Should the NEC or NPC use their own standards of "viability" that were not approved by National Convention? The local chapter's ability to run an independent, principled campaign in line with National Convention despite ambivalence and hostility is commendable, and the results suggest that until such time the NEC and NPC implement rubrics for national endorsement, local strategic autonomy may be essential for projects that treat elections as organizing tools rather than merely win number pursuits.

Takeaways

1. After Zohran Mamdani's general election victory, he began to make several decisions that I would say continue to distance himself from national (and possibly local) DSA organizing, such as keeping Tisch as police chief, calling Díaz and Maduro dictators, or endorsing Brad Lander over a DSA candidate (which pressured them to drop out). At the end of the day, if your focus is only on electing someone without building out an effective

³⁹ I actually agree that the chapter should have been running these campaigns instead of the candidates running campaigns with the DSA chapter running support. I pushed the MAC Chair throughout the campaign about getting the chapter more involved and this did not happen. I don't know if that was a political choice or just a lack of availability. If I would have initiated that effort to have the chapter run operations or political decisions, it would have been poorly done without movement from the chapter itself around it. We had 31 DSA members sign up to volunteer on the campaign who were doing volunteer coordination, leading field operations, and making videos in their own time, so in a way DSA was running operations on the campaign but not intentionally or with political direction.

means of setting expectations and holding them accountable, then what's the point? To see DSA caucuses use rhetoric like “winning and wielding power” without wielding power over the elected official is like playing with an unplugged video game controller.

Discipline from elected officials can't happen when tempering the rhetoric and politics is used for electability. If you run candidates who are specifically trying to organize people into your organization/party, they would naturally be more responsive to DSA demands rather than tailing whatever the elected dictates.

2. Not running as a Democrat was liberating. I felt at my most authentic self as a public speaker/performer. I didn't have to second guess or parse my words, and this authenticity came across to just about everyone who heard me. It's a naturally New Orleans thing we have: we smell bullshit easy. The Republican candidate Bridget Neal mentioned during a neighborhood association meeting “Bob is the most genuine person I've met.” The limitations to not running as a Democrat in hindsight weren't very limiting once I was able to be creative and work through them. Making the canvassing app used by nineteen different users out in the field knocking thousands of doors was really cool, and while it's been a few years since I've personally developed software, it was a nice reminder of how an idea can become impactful in the real world.
3. Being a caucused member of DSA most definitely put a target on my back, and I got more public disdain from socialists than I did from local conservatives and reactionaries. I think specifically it was because I am a member of Red Star, which is Marxist Leninist and also has one of the two co-chair leadership positions in the national organization. Is it sectarian? Anti-communist? Does it matter? It sucked seeing comrades act this way, whether through outright lies about me or the campaign or smearing Red Star for the sake of smearing them on Twitter.
4. The only other time there was an attempt to stifle my campaign was the Lakeview Civic Improvement Association, an almost exclusively white conservative run organization that represents my neighborhood. I was the only candidate not invited by former Republican City Councilmember Scott Shea to participate with false claims about viability and polling that were made directly to me or from others in attendance. Only one poll⁴⁰ was published that placed me 3rd and I had the 3rd most unique donations, but Shea claimed they only took the “top 4” out of 5. The next week Shea announced his endorsement of Holly Friedman.
5. I was really feeling the contradiction of how individualized an election is, I hate talking about myself. I do like to use plural language so it doesn't feel like I'm talking about myself, but it feels weird. I think that each candidate is viewed as a person rather than an individual expression of a collective project, so you have their own flaws/differences in personality, lived experience/resume, leadership, etc. Ballot measures have some immunity to this effect, but with candidates, their individual donors, endorsements, etc are more than just the person but are also extensions of the power supporting them materially and socially.
6. After the race, our chapter voted to recommend against Holly Friedman in the runoff for District A since she's a member of the ADL and the DA's office. This in turn was used as

⁴⁰ Resilience NOLA Poll, Aug 2025.

<https://resiliencenola.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Summary-Memo-Resilience-New-Orleans-Poll-.pdf>

ammunition against Aimee McCarron to suggest she had “out of state” support from DSA that is antisemitic⁴¹. There was also a redbaiting deepfake video (later deleted) of School Board member Carlos Zervigon (who endorsed Aimee) about his support for Zohran Mamdani. If I had made the runoff against Holly, this would have been directed towards me, which I would have gladly refuted and used to the advantage of increasing awareness and pulling people into DSA.

7. In multiple instances there were local DSA members that miscategorized my campaign, saying I didn't plan to win, which is false. As stated in the footnotes, Manny Chevrolet didn't plan to win. I planned to win, but acknowledged my odds of winning were small. This document details the plan to win, in spite of its unlikelihood, and shows how “running to win” creates a false dichotomy.

Appendix

Conventional electoral mathematical concepts

To better define the problem with the conventional “win number” chasing strategy of electoralism, let's lay out the mathematics of these concepts:

$$\text{Win number} = (\text{Calculated turnout}) * 0.5 + 1$$

$$\text{Voter universe size} = (\text{Win number}) * (\text{Universe multiplier})$$

$$\text{Doors to knock} = (\text{Voter universe size}) / (\text{Voters per door})$$

$$\text{Field Budget} = (\text{Cost of literature}) * (\text{Doors to knock}) + (\text{Cost of staff})$$

The primary deliverable of a campaign is to obtain the **Win number** through attempting contact with the number of voters equal to your **Voter universe size**. **Calculated turnout** is a guess. It's a way of estimating how many people will actually vote based on whatever forecasting you wish to choose, whether that's previous election cycles for the office, the most recent election cycle, the most recent Presidential cycle, etc.

The **Universe multiplier** is also a guess, typically somewhere between 3-5 depending on factors such as level of office, number of candidates, etc. I was introduced to the concept that you will need to attempt 3 times as many voters as the votes you need to win. There is no specifics of which voters to target to equal this number or whether that number is less than the total number of active registered voters likely to vote a certain way. This concept appears to have been introduced to the mainstream in the book *The Victory Lab: The Secret Science of Winning Campaigns* by Sasha Issenberg and her coverage of the Analyst Institute and other political consultants like Karl Rove published in 2012. The Analyst Institute is composed of current and former employees of capitalist electoral parties who used proprietary data collected on previous electoral campaigns to inform their paid consultant services. While it is labeled as a non-profit, it specifically uses metadata from electoral campaigns as private property to

⁴¹ https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10162395708193597&id=567218596

commodify data from electoral campaigns to inform candidates across the political spectrum. As such, there is no public data on the effectiveness of these practices other than lists of campaigns they've worked for in the past.

Voters per door can be calculated differently, but it's usually computed once you have access to a voter list to get the number of voters divided by the number of unique addresses. This number fluctuates greatly based on the housing density of particular areas, such as suburban zoned neighborhoods with single family homes versus apartment complexes and multi-family units. This value is also dependent on the voter list being accurate, which in my experience in 2021 and 2025 has shown this is not consistent based on the socioeconomic factors varying between precincts.

The **Voter universe size** attempts to account for doors that don't answer, empty buildings, new tenants that aren't registered to vote, and people who aren't going to be persuaded by your message. The **Field budget** in turn spends money attempting to reach voters that are either not going to see your literature or choose not to see it. In order to achieve your field budget, you must fundraise that amount through a variety of methods including call time, where you solicit money from people you know and strangers whose phone number you need to find without their consent, often with phone calls and voicemails. You're encouraged to maximize the volunteers needed in order to knock on all these doors multiple times.

The mathematical concepts are particularly low order in complexity, which is one of the first faults in this paradigm for chasing a target. It treats voter contact as linear. In reality these values are cumulative over time, so let's instead make the calculation more dynamic as a function over time. At the end of the day, accumulating positive IDs as you approach the win number maps to increasing the likelihood of winning, so that if you accumulate enough positive IDs to equal the win number by election day, the likelihood of winning should equal 100%.

$C(t)$ = cumulative positive IDs by time t

$A(t)$ = cumulative contact rate by time t

$R(t)$ = cumulative positive ID rate by time t

W = Win number

$$\text{Likelihood of winning} = \frac{C(t)}{W} = \frac{A(t) * R(t)}{W}$$

It's helpful to understand how this conventional electoral strategy already operates implicitly within a probabilistic paradigm. The core concepts of win number, voter universe, and positive IDs can be formalized in terms of probability of achieving electoral victory $P_v(t)$ by achieving the win number, and achieving this number through a succession of canvassing actions that increase your positive ID amount towards the win number and in turn increase your probability of achieving victory. This informs other decisions like maximizing the number of volunteers to maximize the number of doors knocked to maximize the number of positive IDs collected.

$$C(t) = A(t) * R(t)$$

$$\Delta C(t) = \eta(t) \cdot \rho(t) \cdot \Delta A(t)$$

$$P_v(t+1) = \sigma(P_v(t) + \frac{\eta(t) \cdot \rho(t) \cdot \Delta A(t)}{W} \cdot Ia(t))$$

$\Delta A(t)$ is the new attempts at time t , $\eta(t)$ is the contact rate at time t (voters answered / voters attempted), and $\rho(t)$ is the conversion rate at time t (positive IDs / voters answered). Ia will equal 0 if they didn't answer and 1 if they did. To make this a proper function of probability, these values are wrapped in a sigmoid function $\sigma()$ that ensures the value is bound between 0 and 1 for valid probability.

An attempt would be a canvassing shift that may have some variable number of voters attempted based on number of volunteers or density of voters in a cut turf. So let's compute the weight of an action's impact on probability for victory as a function of time:

$$w_a^v(t) = \frac{\eta(t) \cdot \rho(t) \cdot \Delta A(t)}{W}$$

As such we can rewrite the probability function of electoral victory over time to be

$$P_v(t+1) = \sigma(P_v(t) + w_a^v(t) \cdot Ia(t))$$

$w_a^v(t)$ is the weight w of an action a at time t that increases or decreases the probability of electoral victory v .

Multi-objective optimization

Instead of the single-objective "win number" model, I propose using a multi-objective framework as a way to articulate Harnecker's insight on the separation of campaign results from election results. In this model, the outcomes of a campaign change over time across multiple streams, such as:

$P_v(t)$: Probability of electoral victory (win number) over time t

$P_m(t)$: Probability of movement-building (DSA member recruitment) over time t

$P_a(t)$: Probability of increasing awareness (campaign materials reach) over time t

For each outcome $k \in \{v, m, a\}$, these probabilities can be represented as the function over time as previously outlined:

$$P_k(t+1) = \sigma(P_k(t) + \sum_a w_a^{(k)}(t) \cdot Ia(t) + \epsilon_k(t))$$

Where

- $P_k(t)$ is the probability for outcome k at time t
- $w_a^{(k)}(t)$ is the weight of the the effect of the probability for outcome k at time t of an action a

- $I_a(t)$ indicates if action a was taken at time t (0 or 1)
- $\epsilon_k(t)$ represents additional effects outside the control of the campaign, including opponent campaign actions
- $\sigma()$ is a sigmoid function that transforms results between 0 and 1 so that the probability value for $P_k(t+1)$ remains a probability

The weight w of the effect of each campaign action a can now be quantified as a vector that describes its impact on the corresponding outcome:

$$w_a(t) = (w_a^{(v)}(t), w_a^{(m)}(t), w_a^{(a)}(t))$$

We can then conceive of a total value of a campaign that is not merely whether the candidate won but the overall contributions towards multiple outcomes. This can be seen in examples like Mamdani's campaign, where there weren't any dramatic inflection points on polling (approximately relative to $P_v(T)$) but a continuous increase over time alongside the size of volunteers and fundraising from small dollar donors. So instead of only $P_v(T)$ on Election Day equaling the campaign's total value, we can express the campaign's total value as a sum of the weighted time integrals of the streams:

$$V = \alpha \int_{t=0}^T Pv(t)dt + \beta \int_{t=0}^T Pm(t)dt + \gamma \int_{t=0}^T Pa(t)dt$$

The weighting coefficients α, β, γ represent the value of relative strategic priorities that balance the sum of each outcome by adjusting the overall value of each stream's total. In turn, the sum of the choices that favor a specific priority will be amplified or suppressed by these coefficients, highlighting the dialectical relationship between tactical choices towards a strategy and the strategic choices that dictate tactics. They are additive, and negative or zero weights of impact impacts the total value of the campaign.

For instance, Zohran Mamdani's primary campaign in New York City might have initially had values $\beta \leq \gamma \leq \alpha$ within a more favorable Democratic electorate that valued movement-building β ("Join DSA!") less than or equal to raising political awareness γ ("Billionaires are making groceries more expensive") less than or equal to α for achieving the win number in the primary. In the general election however, the changing electorate can lead to a strategic choice to increase α relative to β, γ to values $\beta \ll \gamma \ll \alpha$ by walking back earlier statements around Palestine and distancing the campaign from DSA, essentially recalibrating the campaign's strategic value for a different political field that would further optimize the probability of electoral victory probability with potential trade-offs of other outcomes.

The total value of the campaign as additive integrals consciously values a sustained effort that builds over time rather than the total value at the end of the campaign. A boost to DSA membership early in the campaign is more valuable than an equal boost just before election day, as it allows more time for new members to integrate, organize, and contribute to further

recruitment. Similarly, prolonged awareness can shift the discursive terrain more deeply as it occurs early and often rather than lost in GOTV communications. This contrasts with a typical electoral model, whose value is measured by winning the election on Election Day.

Voter Score computation

Base (10 pts max): 10 points for Category 1 (people that voted in the 2021 election or new voters), 8 for Category 2 (people that voted in other municipal cycles), 6 for Category 3 (votes in presidential cycles)

=IF(B2="Category 1", 10, IF(B2="Category 2", 8, IF(B2="Category 3", 6, 0)))

Progressive (7pts max): If they are marked as a progressive, 7 points

Solidarity (7pts max): if they have indicated support for unions, environmental justice, or racial justice: 7 points

DSA (12pts max): if they're a member of DSA that I know of, 12pts (NOTE: I did not leverage membership data for this, just from personal memory of volunteers and previous social interactions).

I know (17pts max): people that know me or i know them and want to target them: 17pts

<45 (6pts max): A degrading scale where if they're over 45 = 0pts, 41 and up = 2, 31 and up = 3, 26 and up = 4, 21 and up = 5, 18 and up = 6

=IF(AA2>45, 0, IF(AA2>=41, 2, IF(AA2>=31, 3, IF(AA2>=26, 4, IF(AA2>=21, 5, IF(AA2>=18, 6, 0))))))

Income (7pts max): another degrading scale based on income bracket. 10% income bracket (i.e. poverty) = 7, 20% = 6 ... 50% = 1, 60 = 0, 70% = -2, and 80% = -5 (there aren't any higher than the 80-89th income bracket on the voter file).

=IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="10", 7,
IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="20", 6,
IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="30", 4,
IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="40", 2,
IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="50", 1,
IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="60", 0,
IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="70", -2,
IF(LEFT(S2, 2)="80", -5, 0))))))

Renter (5pts max): If they are marked as a renter, 5pts, a homeowner = 2pts, and no info is 0.

Donor (5pts max): If they have donated to conservative candidates: -5pts, if they've donated to environmental causes 5pts, if they have donated to liberal candidates 4pts

=IF(U2 = "Yes", -5, IF(T2 = "Yes", 5, IF(V2 = "Yes", 4, 0)))

Party (5pts max): Dems get 4pts, Greens get 5pts, independents get 2pts, everyone else gets -5pts

=IF(E2="Democratic", 4, IF(E2="Green", 5, IF(E2="Non-Partisan", 2, -5)))

Union (4pts max): If they're in a union, 4pts

=====

Add the sum with (Base score * [Precinct's Proj Bob+ percentage]) to get the final score.

[Precinct Proj Bob+ percentage] is computed from the precinct 2021 Bob % added to the difference between Joe Giarrusso's % and the Prog% for that precinct.

Max score: 64.51

Min score: -8.0

Median score: 20.39

Mean score: 20.16