



CHAPTER I

Progressive Majority & the Candidate Recruitment and Development Program

BUILDING A PROGRESSIVE MAJORITY

Progressive Majority was founded in 2001 with the sole mission of electing progressive champions to office at the federal, statewide, state legislative and local levels.

Simply put, our purpose is recruit, promote, train, support and elect candidates who will fight to protect workers' rights, civil rights, access to affordable health care, quality education, a clean and healthy environment, and reproductive freedom once elected. Why is this work so important?

The country is in crisis. We've gone from record surplus to record deficits. Over 10 million workers are without jobs; nearly 44 million people have no health insurance. The clock has been turned back on our civil and economic rights, and many of the environmental protections we've fought for are already gone.

The Right has made it clear that they are on the verge of attaining true partisan realignment – a majority that lasts not for a cycle, but for a generation. They believe this is possible because they have been working toward it for decades.

In the late 1970's, Democrats were in control. Jimmy Carter was President. Both chambers of Congress were held by the Democrats. There were only twelve Republican governors. Republicans controlled only eleven state legislatures. But there was a resurgence brewing on the Right thanks to a cadre of aggressive, young conservative leaders who were developing new strategies for seizing power.

These early foot soldiers first worked outside the Republican Party structure – creating new tactics for mass mobilization and fundraising, developing hundreds of media voices for radio and television, building independent candidate recruitment and support operations. They moved into government slowly as elected officials, aides and policy experts. Over time, they took over the Republican Party.

All of this was achieved because the New Right recognized that trying to work solely through the Republican Party structure would not reap the rewards they could attain by building their own independent political effort. Therefore, they not only invested in strategies that would serve their short term goals – they helped elect a president in 1980 – but they built their movement for the long term.

New Right leaders understood that it would take a wide array of tactics to accomplish their goals. They built ultra-conservative think tanks, such as the Heritage Foundation and the Free Congress Foundation, to develop policy and disseminate message.

These organizations trained new spokespeople to take on liberals, armed activists with information they needed to flood the airwaves and nurtured new organizers. Groups like the Christian Coalition and the Family Research Council ran massive voter registration and mobilization campaigns that helped hundreds of conservatives get elected knowing they owed their victory to conservative causes.

And through GOPAC, founded in 1978, they invested in a serious candidate development and support program that recruited and trained thousands of leaders to run vibrant campaigns at the local and state levels. Nearly two decades later, when Republicans took over Congress in the historic elections of 1994, Newt Gingrich, head of GOPAC, had a legion of candidates running on the same message and the same agenda.

The New Right made their gains because they made a concerted, intentional and strategic political effort. They worked over years to see their vision become reality. They didn't just focus on one strategy, one race, one body of power. There were many organizations, leaders and campaigns that worked in concert to gain lasting control at many levels.

Now, for the first time in decades, progressives have begun organizing with the level of cooperation and discipline that it will take to defeat the Right and build a majority in American politics. There is recognition that the strategy of moving from state to state and from election to election hasn't gotten us far. Now is our time to implement a cohesive strategy to achieve long-lasting gains.

Progressive Majority is leading the way with the Candidate Recruitment & Development Program – recruiting candidates to run for local and state legislative office today, and for other vulnerable seats two elections from now. We are investing the time and resources to find and develop community leaders with the potential to become serious politicians. We are assessing where we need to win locally to affect future redistricting. And we are planning beyond the next election to ensure the long-term health of our movement. All we need now is strong and committed progressives like you to run for public office.

Won't you join us in the fight?

THE CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT & DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In 2003, Progressive Majority launched the Candidate Recruitment and Development Program, through which we are recruiting, training and electing the next generation of political leadership.

Through the Candidate Program, we are launching an innovative candidate recruitment and development program at the state level. Candidates will receive comprehensive and substantive support during their campaigns – and they will become part of a larger political movement designed to elect principled leaders today in order to ensure positive change for tomorrow.

With an eye toward 2011 redistricting, we will conduct comprehensive, strategic targeting within each state utilizing all available demographic, electoral and political data. And we will recruit, develop and maintain a talented “farm team” of candidates committed to advancing a progressive agenda.

The Candidate Recruitment & Development Program is an effective vehicle to recruit progressive leaders to public service because it goes beyond traditional programs to provide the political campaign support and pragmatic skills candidates need to win in today’s political environment.

Candidates that meet Progressive Majority criteria for selection will receive comprehensive, soup-to-nuts support as they undertake their campaigns, including:

- ◆ Regular small-group training sessions featuring the nation’s leading experts in the areas of budgeting, campaign planning, targeting, earned media, fundraising, hiring staff, message development, paid media, message delivery and voter contact;
- ◆ Monthly political benchmarks, requiring that “farm team” members are making progress in becoming viable candidates;



- ◆ One-on-one support in drafting and implementing campaign plans, writing campaign budgets and developing a winning message and stump speech;
- ◆ Assistance with hiring campaign staff;
- ◆ Access to a nationwide network of progressive leaders;
- ◆ Individual mentor relationships with local and national political professionals;
- ◆ A candidate Intranet that allows candidates access to specialized information and opportunities to learn from and network with one another;
- ◆ Comprehensive campaign manuals providing guidance at all stages of campaigning, including helping secure re-election once elected; and
- ◆ Direct financial support.

Through the Candidate Recruitment and Development Program, Progressive Majority is working today to help elect solid progressives to office at all levels of government, to fill the political pipeline with candidates who will continue to seek higher office, and to ensure the vitality and continued growth of the progressive movement for decades to come.

CHAIRMAN

Robert L. Borosage is the president of Institute for America's Future and co-director of its sister organization, Campaign for America's Future. Mr. Borosage is a Contributing Editor at *The Nation* magazine, a regular contributor to *The American Prospect* magazine, and a frequent commentator on national television and radio. He teaches on presidential power and national security as an adjunct professor at American University's Washington School of Law.

Borosage founded the Center for National Security Studies in 1974, became Director of the Institute for Policy Studies in 1979, and in 1989 founded the Campaign for New Priorities. He has served as an advisor to numerous progressive political campaigns, including the Reverend Jesse Jackson, Sen. Carol Moseley Braun and Sen. Paul Wellstone. He is a graduate of Yale Law School.

PRESIDENT

Gloria Totten has worked for progressive causes and political campaigns for 15 years and is considered one of the top political organizers in the country. She was named a "Rising Star of Politics" in 2002 by *Campaigns & Elections* magazine and is the creator and President of Progressive Majority. She also runs ProNET, a national coalition of 68 progressive political organizations working together to increase collaboration and the effectiveness of the progressive movement.

Gloria served as Political Director for NARAL from 1996-2001, where she oversaw the organization's electoral work and managed 27 state affiliates. She has worked on more than 75 federal campaigns and has served as Executive Director for NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland; Education Director for Pro-Choice Resources; President and Lobbyist for the Minnesota Coalition Against Sexual Assault; and Media Chair for It's Time Minnesota! She is currently an Advisory Council member for the Women's Information Network, serves on the Boards of Directors for True Majority, NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland PAC, Gadflyer.com, Advocates for Youth, and is the President of the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center.