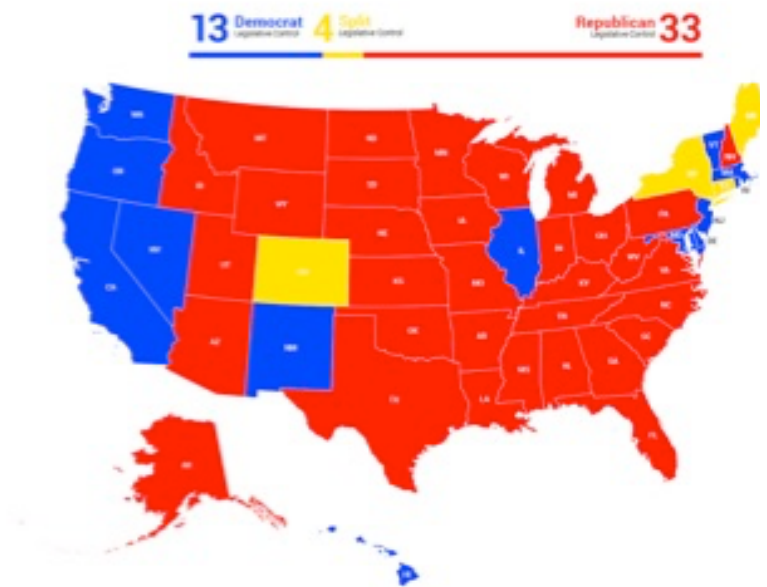




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Outspent.

How Gaps in Democratic Infrastructure Have Allowed the GOP, the Koch Brothers and Dark Money to Dominate State Legislature Elections, Gerrymander Congressional Maps and Advance the Trump Agenda In the States



Over the past eight years, Democrats lost nearly 1,000 seats and 27 state chambers. Republicans now control 4,170 state legislative seats while Democrats control 3,129 seats.

- In 2009, Democrats were in control of 27 state legislatures, while Republicans held only 15. Today, 33 are in Republican control, many by wide margins. 25 of those states are 'trifectas,' which also have a Republican governor.
- During the 2010 elections alone, Republicans picked up 675 legislative seats, gaining complete control of 12 state legislatures while the [RSLC outspent the DLCC by 3:1 \(\\$30 million to just \\$10 million as Democrats failed to devote the resources needed to compete in key state legislative elections\)](#).
- Republicans have poured money into local races through a strong RSLC and an **extensive network of outside groups including the Koch Brothers' Americans For Prosperity**, which has spent tens of millions of dollars on state level elections.
- While Democrats have outside PACs dedicated to House races (House Majority PAC), Senate races (Senate Majority PAC) and the Presidency (Priorities USA and American Bridge), no such outside entity exists to counter the influence of conservative groups at the state house level.
- If Democrats do not climb out of their deficit in key states they risk ceding power to Republicans for another round of redistricting, institutionalizing a Republican advantage locally until 2032.

Conservative Dark Money Will Continue to Dominate State Legislature Unless Progressives Start Fighting Back

- In 2010, then political operative **Ed Gillespie** became the head of the RSLC, the primary national GOP entity overseeing the redistricting process and state legislative elections.
- Under Gillespie's leadership, the RSLC put **\$30 million** behind REDMAP, an extensive an aggressive, systematic strategy to win state legislatures and gerrymander congressional districts across the country in the GOP's favor.
- According to *ProPublica*, the GOP redistricting efforts were so successful because in addition to a robust RSLC, **Republicans were able to rely "on opaque nonprofits funded by dark money, supposedly nonpartisan campaign outfits, and millions**

in corporate donations to achieve Republican-friendly maps throughout the country.”

- *ProPublica* found that during the 2010 elections, the Koch Brothers, through their dark money 501c4 Americans For Prosperity, [bought 6-figure ad buys in individual state house races](#), which in the past had seen minimal outside spending.
- Americans For Prosperity spent **more than \$20 million in 2010 in dark money, spending that grew exponentially to over \$120 million in 2012 and nearly a billion dollars this past election in 2016.**
- In 2018, the infrastructure and spending gap Democrats have faced in state legislative races could be even larger.
- In addition to having to compete with the extensive Koch network, Democrats will also likely face a [new entity funded by Sheldon Adelson](#), who has announced he is working to form a new Super PAC for 2018 that is specifically focused on state legislature elections ahead of redistricting.

Dark Money and GOP Redistricting Success in Virginia: Implications for 2017

- In addition to a competitive Governor’s race this year, Virginia has 100 House of Delegates seats up for reelection in November, which could be an opportunity for Democrats to begin to **unrig the VA congressional map.**
- During the 2016 Election, Hillary Clinton won the popular vote in Virginia by more than 5 percentage points. **Meanwhile, Republicans won a majority of the state’s congressional seats by a 7-4 margin** (Republicans also lost the state’s “House Popular Vote”).
- In 2012, President Obama won Virginia decisively by multiple percentage points and Democratic Congressional candidates won nearly half the votes in Virginia. Due to gerrymandering that translated into winning only 27 percent of the state’s Congressional seats.
- When the current maps were drawn, the GOP had controlled both chambers of Virginia’s legislature and the Governorship with Bob McDonnell’s election in 2010.
- According to Larry Sabato, [Virginia’s new “incumbent protection map” helped “cement the GOP’s 8-3 advantage in congressional representation](#) (even as Virginia was becoming more Democratic).”

- “The district that saw the most change was Rep. Gerry Connolly’s (D) 11th District, which went from being a district where Barack Obama won 57% in 2008 to one where he won 62% that year. The new map shifted heavily Democratic-leaning parts of areas in Fairfax and Prince William counties into Connolly’s district while placing more Republican-leaning parts in then-Rep. Frank Wolf’s (R) 10th District as well as Rep. Rob Wittman’s (R) 1st District,” which according to Sabato put the GOP at a key structural advantage.
- **The Koch Brothers [have continued to make 6 figure ad buys in key state legislative races in Virginia](#)** specifically, spending millions in total of dark money in VA.

Forward Majority is Fighting Back

- Forward Majority, created by Obama campaign veterans and new talent from the business world, is **launching to reduce the Democratic deficit at the state level** and aims to create Democratic majorities in legislatures across twelve key states in advance of 2021 to ensure a fair and functional redistricting process.
- Forward Majority is actively working to:
 - **Target key races to win back chambers:** Most state parties only target a small share of the seats required to win the chamber. We target additional, winnable races to expand the field and put chambers in contention.
 - **Develop and deploy integrated campaigns:** Candidates rarely deploy even the basics of evidence-based best practices. We bring this muscle, while also testing next-generation tactics for areas that have been deficient, like polling and message development, all through independent expenditure campaigns.
 - **Scalable model to win 100’s of races across 12+ states:** Forward Majority will build a national organization with centralized talent, partners and funding that can deploy across multiple states, flexing in line with opportunity and need.
- Forward Majority focuses on the states that have been the most gerrymandered, and will consider investments based on payoff (the efficiency of retaking a chamber) and impact (the efficiency of gaining congressional seats by controlling a chamber).
- The goal is to erase the structural political advantage that Republicans have benefited from nationally over the last decade, one that has led to the estimated 18 seats in the House of Representatives that Republicans control due to partisan gerrymandering.

- Forward Majority will launch comprehensive, data-driven voter contact programs via digital, mail, and grassroots outreach, organizing down to the precinct level and cultivating face-to-face relationships spanning numerous electoral cycles.
- **During this year's elections in Virginia, Forward Majority is prototyping its model.** There, they are focused on winning back legislative seats from Republican incumbents by improving Democratic candidate performance with both persuasion and turnout efforts run through targeted independent expenditure campaigns.
- In Virginia, there are 100 seats, 66 of which are held by Republicans, and Democrats must win 17 seats to flip the chamber and win back the majority. Hillary Clinton carried 51 of 100 districts, and each of the GOP districts, which had no Democratic challenger in the last cycle, now has a candidate.
- **The Virginia Democratic Party only has the resources to compete in 10 of these races. Forward Majority's model focuses on expanding the field, and putting additional seats in play.** If we can't start playing to win collectively in 2017, with Donald Trump in the White House, the challenges for liberals will only increase in the years ahead.
- **Forward Majority is building the model compete in 12 different states, represening ~40% of Congressional seats.** This work and budget is built on a modular basis, with the potential to scale to \$100M across key states.
- Forward Majority's team consists of alums from the Obama campaigns, political operatives from state and local races, and veterans from the world of purpose-driven business.

Forward Majority Honorary Co-Chairs On Closing the Democratic Infrastructure Gap:

Rep. Joe Kennedy III: *"Democrats believe in a system that treats every American with dignity and decency, no matter their color, creed or identity. From the Trump Administration's assault on basic civil rights to the GOP's coordinated voter suppression campaign and rampant partisan gerrymandering, that system is under attack today. Forward Majority will help us defend the Democratic Party's firmest ideals from the front lines of our local communities, driving both progressive policies and the candidates who will champion them."*

Rep. Seth Moulton: *"Over the past decade, Democrats have lost nearly 1,000 state legislature seats. We need to start winning again, up and down ballot. I proudly endorse Forward Majority because they understand that the status quo isn't working. We need a new generation of leadership, a fresh perspective, and a new approach if we're going to be successful in 2018 and beyond. Forward Majority is focused on recruiting new talent to win back power in the states. I*



am eager to work with them as we take the Democratic Party, and country, in a new and better direction."

Gov. John Hickenlooper: *"We face unprecedented challenges to our democratic traditions and ideals. We need to have an honest, balanced national conversation on civil liberties, healthcare and the environment. We need to reform our justice system and make sure everyone has the training to be part of the 21st century economy. To do this, it's imperative we have representation that reflects America, so we can reignite the flame of bipartisan work in the best traditions of our country."*