

## MEMO

**From:** Grecia Lima, National Political Director, Community Change Action

**Date:** 2023.12.13

**RE:** Winning elections, healing our democracy

Friends:

As we enter the last few days of the calendar year — days often filled with the idyllic images of warmth, of family and friends, of places we call home — I keep coming back to a report I read earlier this year from the U.S. Surgeon General on the epidemic of loneliness. Despite the face of holiday cheer, the stark reality is that Americans are more isolated than ever before, impacting the health of our persons, our communities, and I believe our democracy.

In the leadup to the 2023 elections, Community Change Action leaned into the opportunity to pulse check for 2024 and tested how we can reach the isolated, those outside of a political community. With our relational organizing leaders, we targeted people who didn't vote in 2022 in order to understand what it would take in order for them to re-engage in civic life.

Let me give you the rough news first. **The fractures and disinformation that have plagued recent elections remain.** In one-to-one conversations, we saw that Latino voters, especially Latino men, are still drawn to the economic messaging of our opposition. Crime remains a top concern even in the face of economic instability and the opportunity of Bidenomics. Navigating voting systems and suppression is an ongoing challenge. We have a long way to go to rebuild the voting blocks and community necessary to compete in 2024.

Still, I see a path forward. In the leadup to Election Day we also reached out to each and every Texan in our reach to encourage them to support Prop 2, a measure designed to help child care providers keep their doors open as we fight for accessible and affordable child care for all. These voters had been part of our growing political home, engaged year-round in civic life — and 100% of these voters emphatically agreed to join us in voting yes. Care is, and likely will continue to be, a resonating and motivating issue. (And we are still collectively celebrating this landmark red-state win with all but 1 county resoundingly approving the measure!)

As this striking result shows, our model relies on one key factor: **To reach those outside the political process, we must begin conversations early.** This allows enough space and time to align values and messaging to political and candidate conversations, sustaining enthusiasm beyond what the top-of-the-ticket might naturally provoke. This level of ongoing connection is necessary to overcome voter suppression, disinformation, and apathy — as well as to navigate the more complex and locally-driven voting structures.

The impact of relational voter contact reaches far beyond one election. After the election, this infrastructure remains activated to advance bold, popular campaigns and legislation that significantly improve the lives and communities of our voters. In just the past few weeks, our relational organizing leaders have leaned into amplifying narratives on the role of care and caregiving, built upon popular conversations around the legacies of former First Lady Rosalynn Carter and U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.



Through this, our leaders are sharpening their own identities, inviting new peers into our fight, and providing insight on messaging that can be used across all of our programs. And, on a broader scale, these campaign connections show voters what their own power (not politicians) can make possible — finding faith in the basic function of our democracy to deliver for its people.

**How we win elections is how we also heal our democracy: by being in community.**

Yours in the fight,

Grecia Lima  
National Political Director, Community Change Action  
Executive Director, Community Change Voters

P.S. - Look forward to connecting in the new year as we build the power we need for November 2024!