

Annual Report to the Grassroots

February 13, 2006



One year ago today...

Governor Howard Dean launched his plan for building a new Democratic Party. The members of the Democratic National Committee endorsed that plan unanimously when they elected him chairman, and hundreds of thousands of Democrats signed on to that plan during his first week on the job. Below are the points of that plan, and the results so far.

The Plan:

Show Up Everywhere
Strengthen State Parties and the Grassroots
Focus On Our Core Values
Take Advantage of Cutting-Edge Technologies
Train Tomorrow's Leaders



The Results So Far:

Show Up Everywhere

Wins in Virginia and New Jersey: A seven million dollar investment in these two crucial contests produced two new Democratic governors. Governors Tim Kaine and Jon Corzine will continue to benefit from the long-term investments made in these states, and their wins signal that Democrats can and will win elections everywhere. In a signal of things to come, Democrats also picked up two seats in the Virginia legislature in post-November special elections -- seats that had been held by Republicans.

Wins at Every Level of Office: In addition to these high-profile Democratic victories, historic down-ballot victories in Arizona, Minnesota, West Virginia, New Hampshire and Alabama are another early indication that Gov. Dean's plan to reinvigorate state parties with organizers will provide Democratic victories up and down the ballot in 2006, 2008 and beyond. In Tucson, Arizona, Democrats took back the city council by defeating two Republican incumbents. In Minnesota, two Democrats won seats in the state Senate elections that Republicans had held for over a decade. We also elected mayors in West Virginia and Alabama, including the first African-American mayor of Mobile, and won seven of eight special elections for the New Hampshire state legislature.

Strengthen State Parties and the Grassroots

State Party Partnership Program: Governor Dean launched an unprecedented program to provide well-trained staff and resources to state parties based on their individual needs to strengthen the local party infrastructure. To date, every single state has received funding and more than 150 activists and operatives have been hired and trained. These organizers will work with the state party to build Democratic organizations in every single precinct in their states. They have hit the ground in important swing states like Ohio and West Virginia, but also meant an historic investment in places like Alaska and Arkansas.

The American Majority Partnership: Last summer, Chairman Dean created the American Majority Partnership to change how the DNC reaches out to our core constituencies, replacing a series of isolated operations with a proactive, constituency-focused, issues-based program. Housed in the Chairman's office to elevate the visibility and profile of this critical work, AMP

coordinates constituency-related activities across all DNC departments. AMP has led successful community outreach events in Texas, California, North Carolina, Colorado, Ohio, Arizona, Washington and Missouri, hosted two major national constituency-focused grassroots summits (Hispanics and Women) and will soon host a third, the first-ever national Asian American and Pacific Islander political organizing summit.

A New Off-Year Record in 2005: Building upon the success and long-term investment of former DNC Chairman Terry McAuliffe, the DNC raised more than \$51 million in 2005 -- a record for a non-election year and a 20% increase over the total raised in 2003. This record fundraising has enabled the DNC to make critical early investments in grassroots organizing across America.

Record Numbers of New Donors: The number of committed monthly donors more than doubled in 2005, thanks to the Democracy Bonds program. In addition, the number of major donors to the DNC has more than tripled since 2003. Overall, more than 584,000 people contributed to the DNC in 2005 -- an increase of more than 90,000 people compared to 2003.

Building the Democracy Bonds Community: Governor Howard Dean launched the Democracy Bonds program, and bought the first one himself to signify his commitment, because he believes that we can take our country back with every Democrat taking responsibility for getting their family, friends and neighbors involved. The Republicans raise \$10 million every month from corporate interests and lobbyists. The Democratic Party will never be able to compete in the traditional ways with a party that has abandoned the people and taken selling access and influence to a new level. But we can do it if half a million people are giving \$20 a month to change the way our political process works. The Democracy Bonds program -- a commitment by ordinary Americans to make small monthly contributions to the Democratic Party -- is already bearing fruit, and in 2006 current online Democracy Bond holders will raise more than \$7 million for the DNC.

Raising Money for State Parties: In 2005, Governor Dean traveled to 40 states and hosted fundraisers for 22 state parties, in addition to record-breaking for the Democratic National Committee itself.

Diverse Involvement in Fundraising: Chairman Dean's fundraising also extends to a diverse group of Councils that work on issues of concern to the Democratic Party. For example, the Women's Leadership Forum (WLF), building upon 13 years of successful fundraising and networking, has a National Board of 96 women activists, political leaders, and fundraisers working to educate, engage, and mobilize women across the country.

Focus On Our Core Values

Never Backing Down: Governor Dean has lived up to Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call to never remain silent about the things that matter. From the failed management of the war in Iraq to the moral crisis of 45 million people without access to healthcare, he has shown honesty and backbone and encouraged more Democrats to do the same.

A Clear Agenda: Working with other party leaders, we have created and begun to communicate a clear agenda for change:

Honest Leadership and Open Government -- We will end the Republican culture of corruption and restore a sense of responsibility to elected office, and we will pass fundamental reforms that make government more honest, open, and accountable to the American people than ever before.

Real Security -- We will protect Americans at home by getting serious about homeland security, and address the real threats abroad by capturing or killing Osama bin Laden and focusing on actual (not imagined) nuclear proliferation. We will be prepared for the threats of tomorrow, and we will always tell the truth to our troops and the American people.

Jobs in America that will Stay in America -- We will keep good jobs from leaving and ensure that every job in America is a fair deal. We will balance the budget, ensure that the tax code is simple and fair, and create jobs by making America energy independent.

A Strong Public Education System -- We will strengthen our nation's public schools to restore opportunity and optimism for every American.

A Health Care System that Works for Everyone -- We will join every other industrialized country by making sure everyone has access to affordable health care. We will change a corrupt, inefficient system into one that makes sure the world's wealthiest country is also the healthiest.

Take Advantage of Cutting-Edge Technologies

A key part of Governor Dean's plan to rebuild the Democratic Party is to use the power and potential of technology as part of an aggressive push to meet and include voters, work with state parties, increase fundraising and get our message out.

Overhaul of Democrats.org: The official DNC website, Democrats.org, received a complete overhaul, making the site more dynamic resource portal for state parties, Democratic organizations, and Democratic activists around the world. The web site has made the Democratic Party more transparent, more accessible, and more empowering for ordinary people than ever before.

Online organizing: Governor Dean has committed the DNC to integrating technology seamlessly with the party's organizing operation. He continues to break new ground not only in fundraising, but in developing new and innovative ways for ordinary people to take part in our political process and organize in their communities. The web site has hosted thousands of events and been the vehicle for millions of independent actions by ordinary Americans to shape our political process, including over a thousand Organizing Kickoff meetings nearly a year before the 2006 midterm elections.

Online fundraising and small donors: Technology has empowered small donors from across the country to become powerful stakeholders in the party. Small donations over the Internet accelerated even faster than the overall improvement in fundraising. The DNC also recently launched a new personal fundraising tool, which allows anyone to create their own page on the web site and take fundraising into their own hands.

Train Tomorrow's Leaders

Organizers and other staff received comprehensive training: New staff deployed to the states travel to Washington for multi-day training on everything from voter contact to press relations to legal compliance. Several states are trained at the same time, offering the diverse staff the ability to share experiences and best practices as part of the program. All new organizers have clear, measurable goals and performance reviews, and DNC headquarters staff regularly visit the states to conduct additional trainings.

Trainees become trainers: Part of every professional organizer's role is to train grassroots volunteers and local leaders to be more effective. They are creating a network for sharing best practices and building a team of volunteers to drive results.

Organizers make a four-year commitment: Organizers being hired in the states make a multi-year commitment to the program, so that the networks and relationships they build will last beyond 2006 and 2008 -- creating a permanent infrastructure of expertise and accountability that will win elections for decades.

