

Where do we go from here?

Jeanne Miranda MWD 11-20-22 Meeting

Our amazing group has now worked together through three elections, supporting Democratic candidates, both local and national. In addition, we have educated ourselves about policies and issues that are critical to our political work. Because we are two years away from the next election, we have an opportunity to use this time to delve into topics that can help us in our future work. We all agree that there are many policy areas that are important to us. I will suggest some potential areas for us to consider.

First, Brian Colker does an amazing job of analyzing the elections for us, informing us about who votes and how they vote. Cutting edge research is now available to enhance our analyses of the polls. Researchers from Vanderbilt University (John Sides) and UCLA (Lynn Vavreck) have surveyed 500,000 U.S. voters to understand how they make their choices. One conclusion is that a driving factor in voting in our current polarized world is that voters see the opposing party as likely to create a world they do not want to live in. This view of the opposing world is shaped largely by extreme positions often highlighted in the media. Further understanding how voters are making their voting decisions can sharpen our ability to canvass effectively.

For a policy area, I propose we learn more about the policy levers that could reduce income inequality. At the current time, the top 1% in the U.S. own 31% of the wealth. The next 90-99% own 37% of the wealth, and the 50-90% group own 29% of the wealth. Unfortunately, the bottom 50% only own 3% of wealth. Globalization has reduced wealth inequality between nations, but increased wealth inequality within nations. This wealth inequality trades human capital for high end consumption. We do not invest in training our workers to perform skilled tasks that are then valued appropriately through wages and benefits. Much of the work force holds service positions that are not well valued. Policies addressing labor, tax laws, anti-trust laws, as well as regulatory policies could decrease the injustice of our current system.

We are excited that young voters are overwhelmingly Democrats. An issue extremely important to them is climate change. We can learn from science ways to help activate people to work collectively around climate change.

I look forward to our learning together how to best advocate for change in the many policy areas critical to the well-being of our nation.