



Webinar 6: Values, Voters, Congress, and Our Future

STARTS SOON

Elections are too important to be left in the hands of candidates, parties, political consultants, and megadonors.

We can do better!

www.valuestovotes.com



Webinar 6 – Values, Voters, Congress, and Our Future

Wednesday, January 7th, 3:30 Central

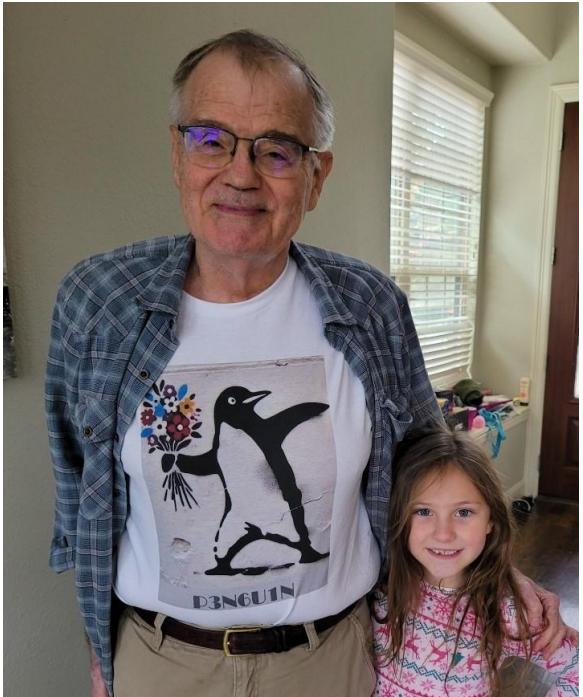


Making the 2026 Congressional Elections a Game Changer for Our Children: The Imperative for 501c3 Electoral Advocacy

www.valuestovotes.com

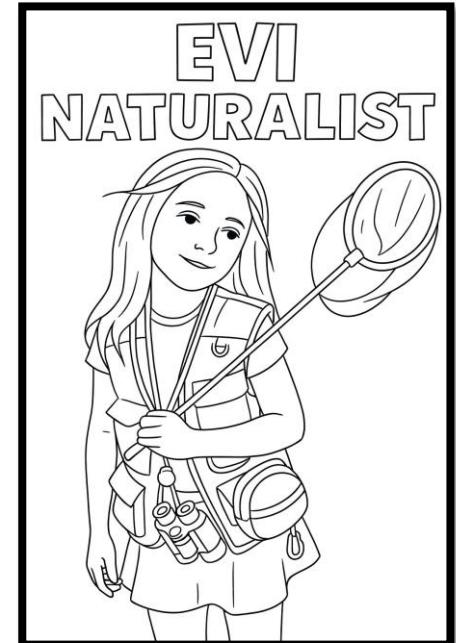


Webinar 6: Values, Voters, Congress, and Our Future



About Me (Charlie Bruner):

- 150,000 hours experience thinking and working to link research, policy and politics to support children and families
- Freelance child policy agitator and manager of Values to Votes Project and website
- Old, white, DEI guy sign holder
- **Grandfather and Single Value Voter (kids)**



Color her future
Bright.

Making the 2026 Elections a Game Changer for Our Future Key Points

1. The 2026 Congressional elections are up for grabs.
2. Partisan campaign strategies are stuck in a rut.
3. Persuadable voters will decide the election.
4. The stakes are incredibly high for children.
5. Child, parent and family electoral advocacy can be key with persuadable constituencies.
6. 501c3 advocacy strategies, using grassroots influencers, are key.

1. 2026 Congressional Elections Are Up For Grabs

The New York Times

Control of Congress 2026: Latest Polls

Generic poll on party preferences of
30 most recent polls (December)

45% Democrat

42% Republican

13% Undecided

(Democrats need to outperform Republicans by 3 percent overall to gain House majority)



<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/polls/congressional-vote-2026.html>

2. Partisan Campaign Strategies Are Stuck in a Rut

\$10 billion will be raised and spent in partisan efforts to influence 2026 Congressional elections, producing:

- Voter fatigue
- Suspicion of motives of candidates
- Lack of faith in government

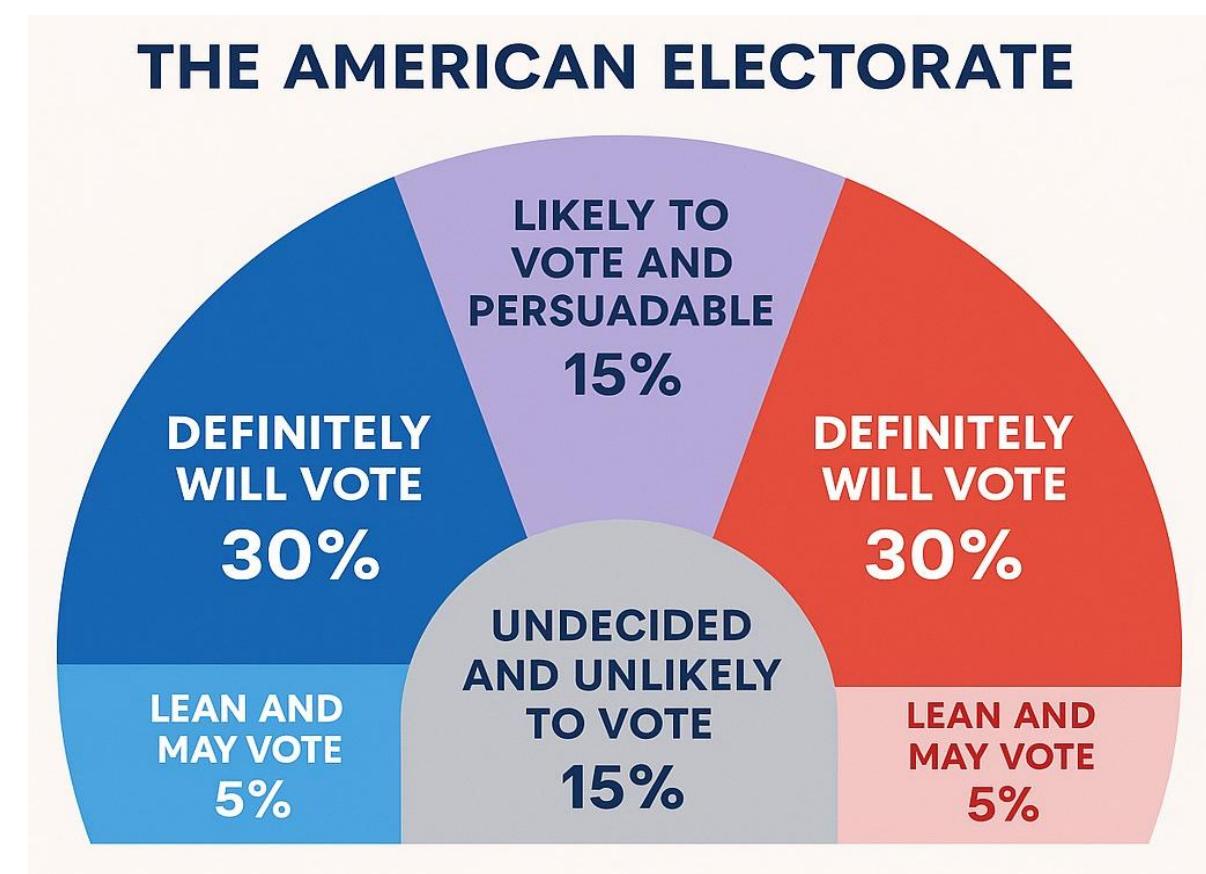
*Elections are too important
to be left in the hands of
candidates, parties, political
consultants, and megadonors.*



3. Persuadable Voters Will Decide the Election

The Persuadable 15%

- Not captive to a media bubble or wedded to partisan messaging
- Frustrated with elections
- Distrustful of politicians
- Concerned about their (and their children's) future – including pocketbook but also broader life values
- Connected to friends and community
- Wanting their vote to count



4. The Stakes Are Incredibly High for Children, Parents, and Families

GOVERNMENT INVESTMENTS IN CHILD AND FAMILY POLICIES AND SERVICES (Follow the Money)

- **Congressional Republicans Today:** Corporate and individual tax cuts to the wealthiest to spur growth and cuts to health, education, and human services to pay for them and conditions restricting support to those who deserve them (\$7 trillion in tax cuts and \$2+ trillion in spending cuts)
- **Congressional Democrats Today:** Corporate and individual tax increases to pay fair share and investments in health, education, and human services that reduce inequities and recognize special needs (\$4 trillion in tax increases and \$3 trillion in investments)

GOVERNMENT APPROACH TO VALUING FAMILIES

- **Congressional Republicans Today:** Valuing only working, “traditional” families as the standard and legislating morality around them
- **Congressional Democrats Today:** Providing support enabling all families to get by, raise their children, and participate in society (DEI)

The Basics of Current Federal Budget Directions

Trump and Congressional Republicans – 2017-20, 2025 (Now permanent)

\$7 Trillion in Tax Cuts Overall (\$5 Trillion to Wealthiest)

\$2+ Trillion in Health, Nutrition, Education, and Family Security Expenditure Cuts

Biden-Harris and Congressional Democrats 2021-24 (Temporary) and 2025 Proposals

\$4 Trillion in Tax Increases to Wealthiest

\$3 Trillion in Health, Nutrition, Education, and Family Security Expenditure Increases & Refundable Credits

Congress Going Forward – Opportunity to Review and Redo (Annualized Estimates) 2017-2025 Actions

Review/Redo Taxes

Reduce corporate tax rate cut by ½ (to 28%) – **\$90B**

Revise estate tax to 2016 rates -- **\$25B**

Close other corporate tax preferences and loopholes -- **\$120B**

Enact other multinational corporate provisions -- **\$70B**

Increase top personal income tax to 39.6% -- **\$20B**

Limit preferential treatment of pass-through income for high income -- **\$25B**

Close other individual tax preferences and loopholes -- **\$35B**

Restore IRS enforcement for high income taxpayers -- **\$15B**

Adopt ARPA CTC EITC provisions -- **\$90B**

Adopt ARPA ACA Premiums Credits – **\$30B**

Do all of above **\$280B**

Review/Redo Spending

Restore Medicaid cuts -- **\$80B**

Restore SNAP cuts -- **\$30B**

Expand child care/preschool -- **\$40B**

Expand home and community services -- **\$40B**

Restore DOGE/Executive Order cuts

Do all of above **\$190B**

A note on the CTC – Republican actions basically a wash, increasing CTC while eliminating the personal exemption. Democratic actions a major increase by adding an additional \$1000-\$1600 to CTC AND making it refundable (necessary for families making less than \$75,000 to get the full value)

The Care Agenda is the Presentation of a Core Child, Parent, and Family Agenda and Is on the Table

If we want the best economy in the world, we need the best care economy in the world –

-- President Biden



- Expanded and refundable child tax credit
- Paid family leave
- Expanded child care and preschool
- Home and community services
- \$2+ trillion funded by increased tax collections from the wealthiest individuals and corporations

5. Child Electoral Advocacy Strategies Can Be Key with Several Persuadable Constituencies

Parents (and Grandparents):

- Refundable Child Tax Credit
- Child care/preschool
- Child and family health care
- Paid family leave

Parents 22 percent of the electorate
Grandparents 25 percent of the electorate

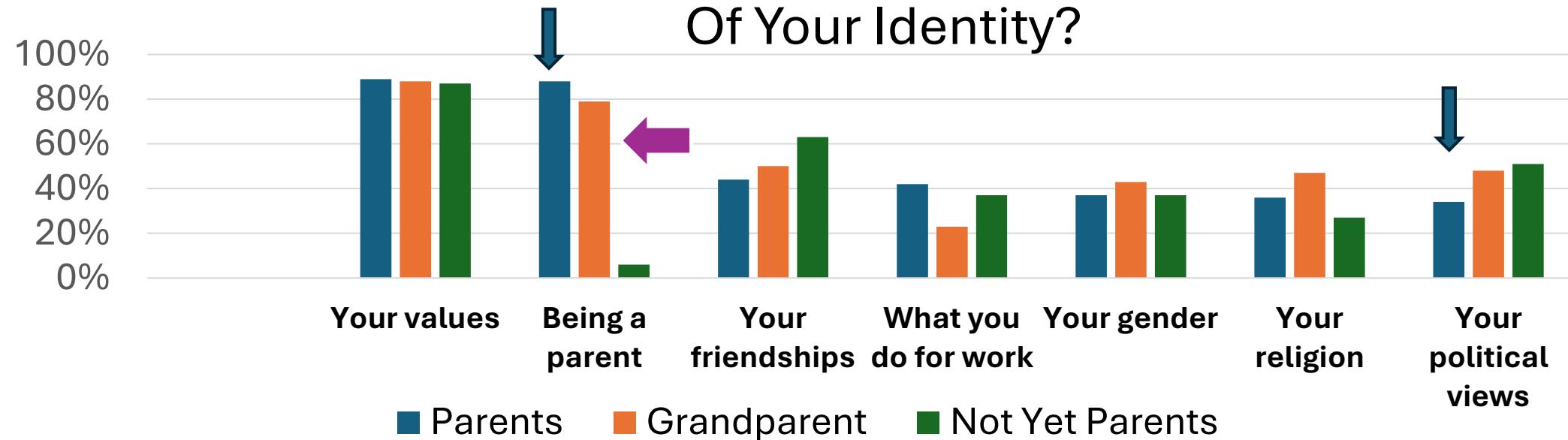
Workers in the Care and Education Community:

- Decent pay and working conditions
- Valued for the work they do
- Benefits to those they serve

Frontline workers 8 percent of the electorate

5. Parents (and Grandparents) as Core Persuadable Electorate

To What Extent are Each of These A Big Part Of Your Identity?



Parents
Together

Of all voters, parents say they are most likely to change their votes and party preferences based upon their values and what candidates say. Grandparents are the second most likely.

Parents were much bigger “swing voters” than nonparents in their choices for President from 2020 and 2024. ABC Exit Polls of Shift – Men with children 10% swing to R, Women with children 9% swing to R; Men without children 6% swing to R, Women without children 0% swing.

6. 501c3 Advocacy Strategies, Using Grassroots Influencers, Are Key



Persuadable Voter: White, working class, rural, paycheck-to-paycheck, mom with husband working long hours and primary caregiver for preschooler and elementary school child and working part-time to supplement family income.

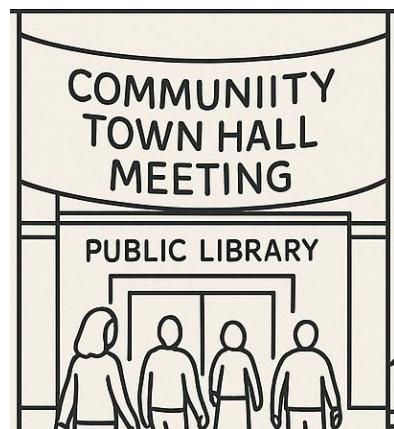
Possible Influencers:

- Day care provider who got her a sliding fee slot that makes care almost affordable.
- Co-worker in nursing home who advocates for better pay
- Next-door neighbor who lends a hand when needed
- Member of Board of State Child Policy Advocacy organization
- ParentsTogether website offering information about child development

Venues and Options for Persuasion: The 501c3 Wheelhouse

Voters respond to:

- People they know and trust
- Information directed to what they care about
- Settings they feel welcome
- Agendas that support dialogue/exchange and listening to what they care about



Forums/Coffees



Conversations

501c3 Organizations and Members as Key to Engaging, Educating, Dialoguing with, and Energizing Voters (Provided they Have Resources to Do So)

National Organizations



**PARTNERSHIP
FOR AMERICA'S
CHILDREN**
State and local child advocates working together for a better future



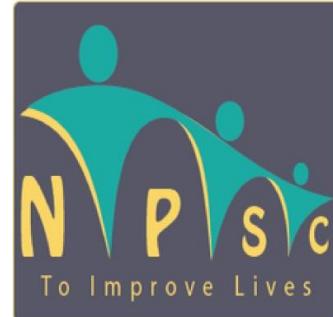
FIRST FOCUS
CAMPAIGN FOR CHILDREN



**children's
defense fund**
unleashing the joy in growing up



Save the Children®



Children's Budget Coalition

National Networks with Grassroots Members



Parents Together



MomsRising



**CARING
ACROSS
GENERATIONS**

**HealthEquity
Community
Collaborative**
Community-Based
Workforce Alliance

FAMILY VOICES®

Finding the Funding Niche

Candidates, Parties and

PACs – \$10 Billion 2026

Congressional Campaigns

Gotcha Media

Partisan Messages

Some GOV

A little more nonpartisan
grassroots activity -- **\$100M**

(Almost none to grassroots and state
education and dialogue leading to
persuasion)

Movement Voter Project/
Battleground Alliance, etc.



??? \$M



Philanthropy and Nonprofits – \$40 Billion (health, education, and public good)

Supplemental services and supports to what government provides

Research and demonstration

A little public education

Almost no direct lobbying/advocacy
(State and national child policy advocacy groups -- **\$100 M/\$1 Million**
Electoral Education and Advocacy)

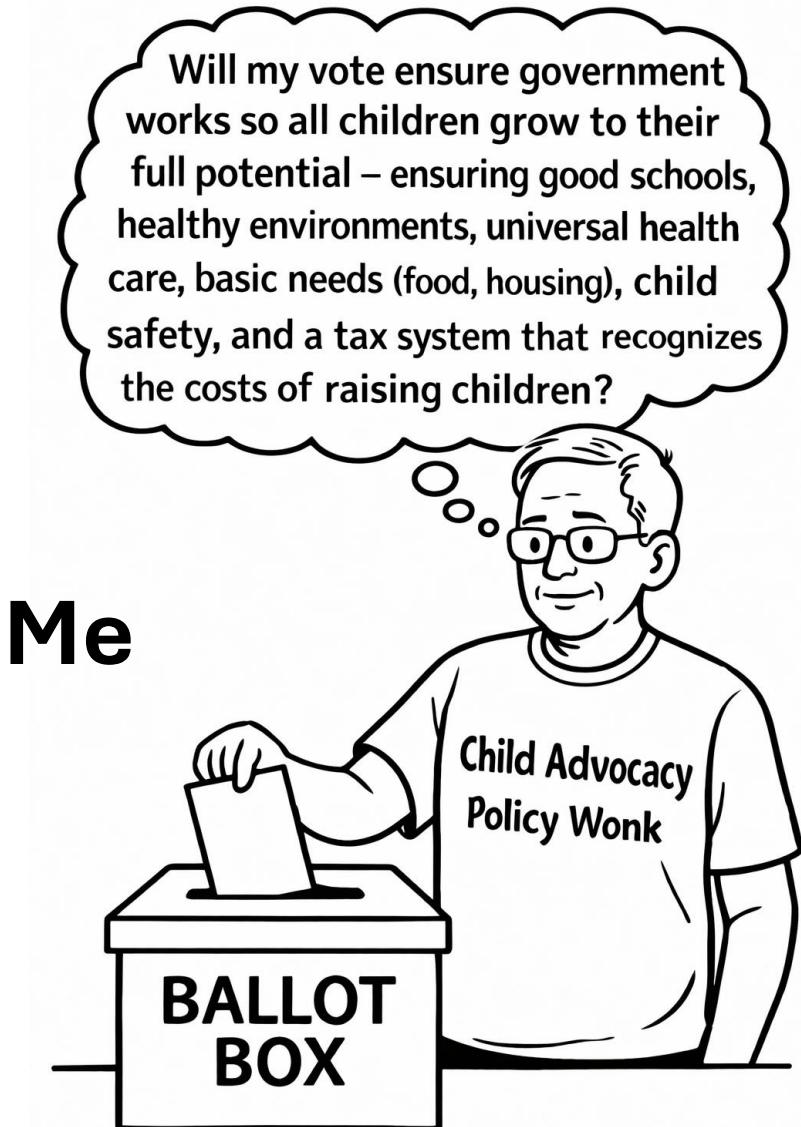
Packard, Kellogg, Casey, Ford, Pew, Soros, etc.

Webinar 6 – Values, Voters, Congress, and Our Future Key Points

1. The 2026 Congressional elections are up for grabs.
2. Partisan campaign strategies are stuck in a rut.
3. Persuadable voters will decide the election.
4. The stakes are incredibly high for children and families.
5. Child and family electoral advocacy can be key with persuadable constituencies.
6. 501c3 advocacy strategies, using grassroots influencers, are key.
7. My goal -- My goal – to be a pro bono “senior strategist” kitchen cabinet member to maximize the impact of funding directed to this work

Discussion – What can we do to advance 501c3 electoral education and advocacy? Your goal?

Single Value Voter – Child, Parent, and Family Policy



Me

Many Parents (if they know)



Your Turn

APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL SLIDES

More on the Federal Budget

**The Niche for 501c3
Advocacy**

**My Single Value Voter
Bottom Line**

Explaining the Congressional Budget Choices – Two Different Directions

Reduce government taxation and oversight on private sector and personal wealth to spur economic growth

Cut expenditures to narrow the federal safety net of services to only those who deserve and need them

Tax Cut and Jobs Act/One Big Beautiful Bill Act, Executive Orders, DOGE

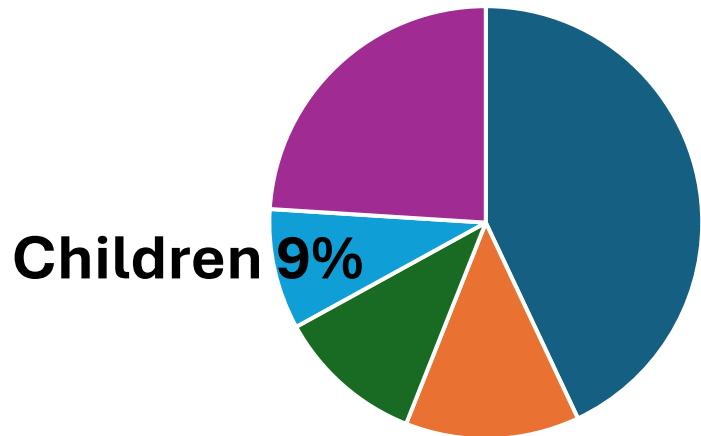
Increase government taxation and oversight on the wealthiest individuals and corporations to pay fair share and fund necessary public sector services, and eliminate abuse and diseconomies

Providing a public infrastructure for affordable health care and investments in education and human services

American Rescue Plan Act, Build Back Better, Harris-Biden Care Agenda, Executive Orders

Follow the Money: The ABC's of the Congressional Budget for Children

Federal Budget Breakdown 2023



- Adult Medicare/Medicaid/SS (43%)
- Defense (13%)
- Interest on Debt (11%)
- Children (9%)
- All Other (24%)

2023 Child Expenditures (in \$billions)

Health Care	157	30.9%
Nutrition	95	18.5%
Refundable Tax Credits	84	16.4%
Education CC	89	17.4%
SS/SSI/VA Benefits	49	9.5%
TANF/AA/Foster Care	22	4.3%
All Other	15	3.0%
	511	100.0%

Federal expenditures represent 42% of all state/local/federal expenditures on children.

Source: Urban Institute Kids Share 2024.

The Niche for 501c3 Advocacy

MESSAGES



KNOWLEDGE

Mobilizing

Maximizing Participation at Rallies, Protests, Twitter Storms

Energizing a Strong Vocal Base

Showing Support for a Different Path

Raising Money

Organizing

Building the Base of Advocates and Expanding their Activities

Doing Outreach to the Less Engaged

Energizing and Getting Out the Vote

501c3 Persuading

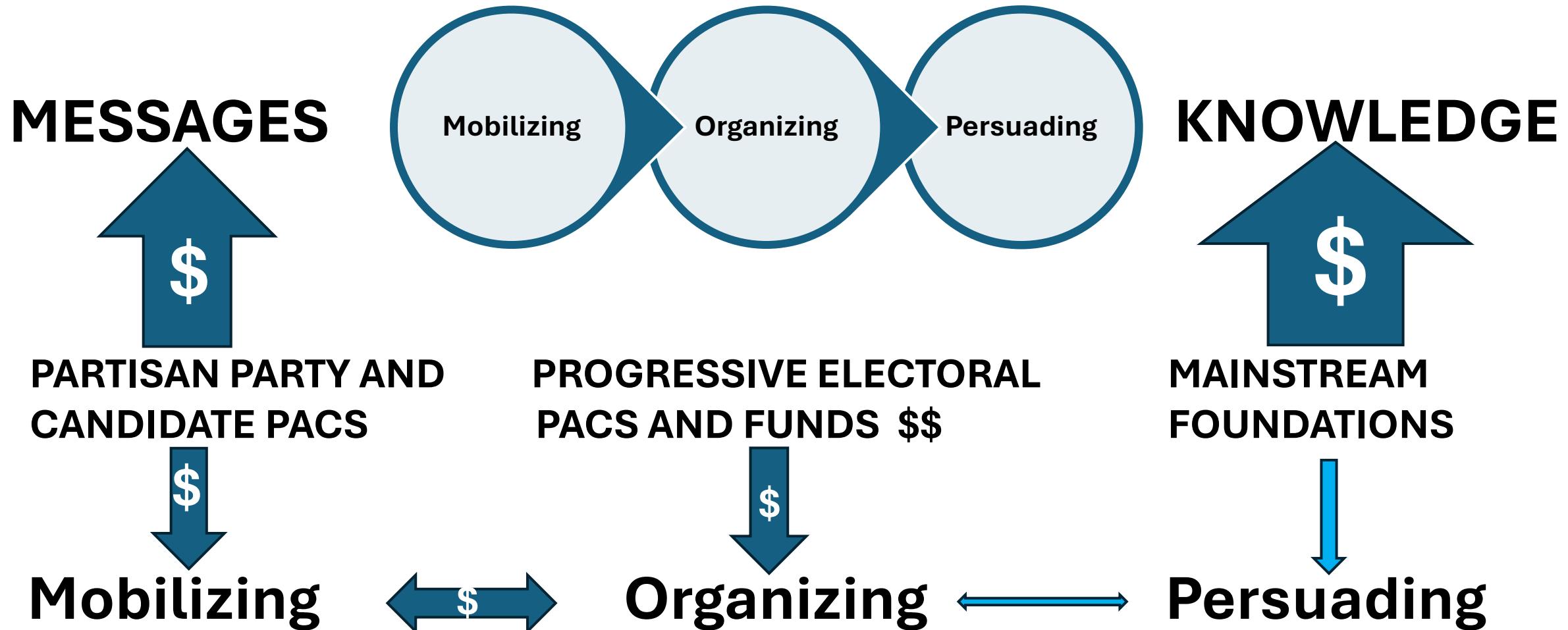
Engaging Persuadable Voters on their Own Ground

Bringing Information to the Table

Engaging in Dialogue

Following up

The Niche for 501c3 Advocacy



Charlie as Single Value Voter – What I Want Congresspeople to Do for Children

FISCAL/INVESTMENT/SPENDING

- Tax system that recognizes expenses of raising children
- Good schools for all children
- Universal child health coverage
- Child protection and response to special needs
- Basic needs/nutrition and housing
- Safe homes and communities
- Supports for parents in nurturing roles (child care, paid leave, home visiting, etc.)

REGULATORY/ENFORCEMENT

- Child rights as well as parental rights and responsibilities
- Anti-bullying
- Diversity, equity, and inclusion