



ORGANIZING & WINNING THE MIDWEST

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 23, 2022

PROJECT CONTEXT

TEAM

- 11 Midwest donors and funders
- Johns Hopkins University
- Democracy, Power & Innovation Fund
- State Power Fund
- Primary authors: Midwest organizers

GOALS

- Disrupt dominant approach/myths
- Shift thinking re investments in Midwest
- Organize donors, practitioners, and key stakeholders into a regional strategy

WHY THIS
APPROACH
MATTERS

WHAT IS AT
STAKE



FUNDER

PERSPECTIVE

MARY SOBECKI

Executive Director
Needmor Fund

DIFFERENT APPROACH TO **ANALYSIS**

LONG-TERM STRATEGY

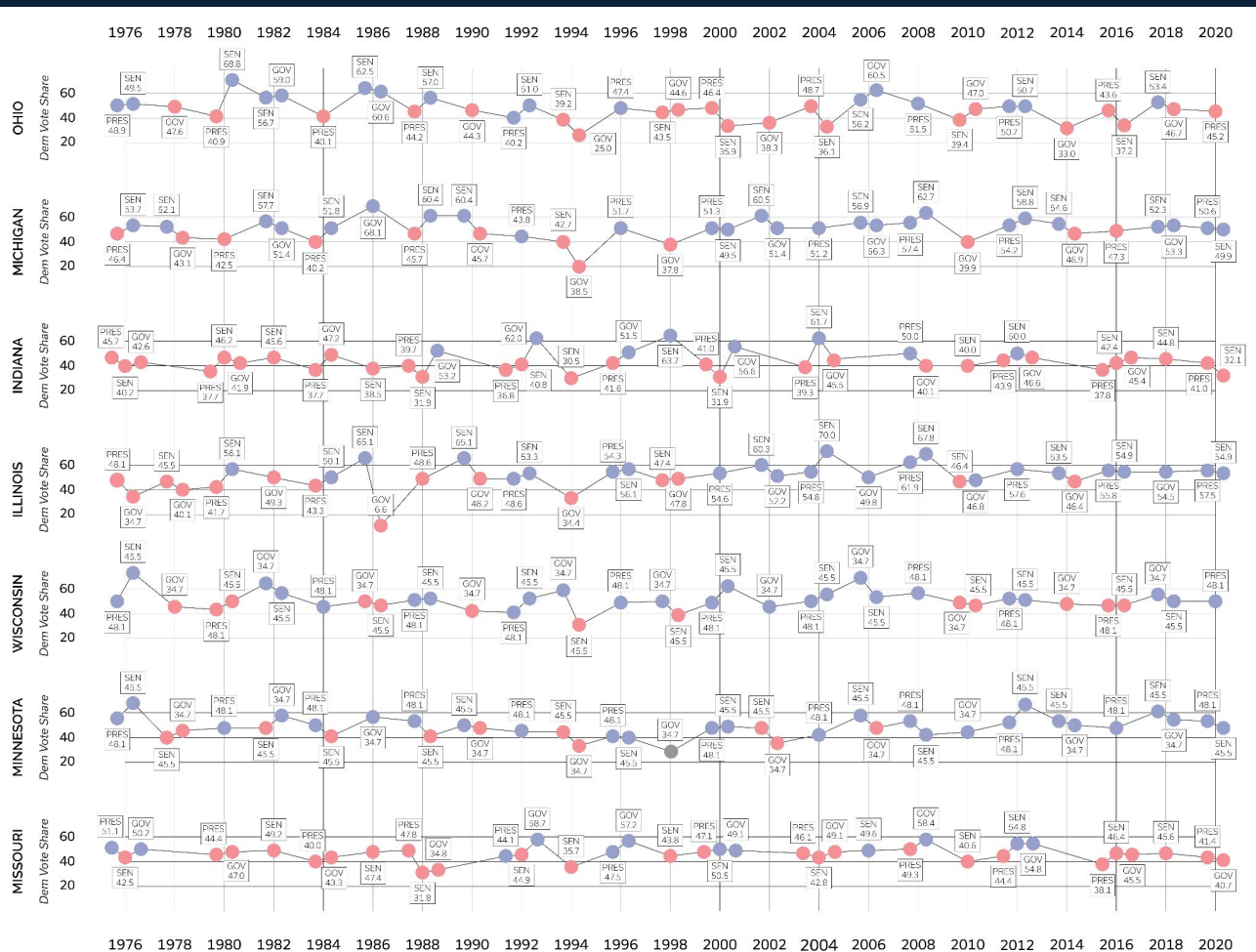
- Ahistorical orientation to politics leads to short-term investments and hyper-tactical methodologies
- Little to no long term infrastructure is built with the dominant approach

UNDERSTANDING VOLATILITY

- Hope, despair, precarity underpin volatility
- The region has always been volatile

THE REGION HAS
ALWAYS
BEEN VOLATILE

CURRENT SWINGS
ARE ACTUALLY
MORE MINOR
THAN 1980S
OR OTHER ERAS



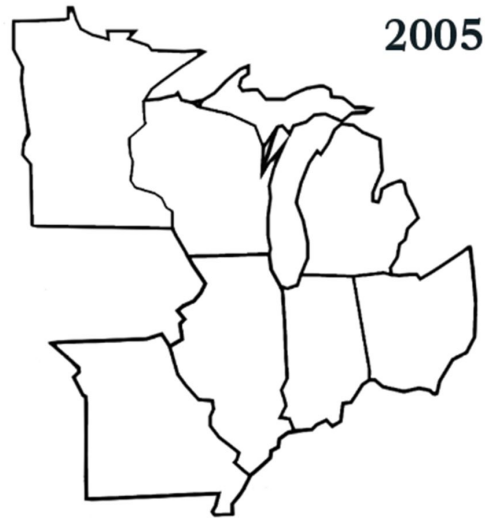
DIFFERENT APPROACH TO **ANALYSIS**

FACTORS THAT UNDERPIN VOLATILITY

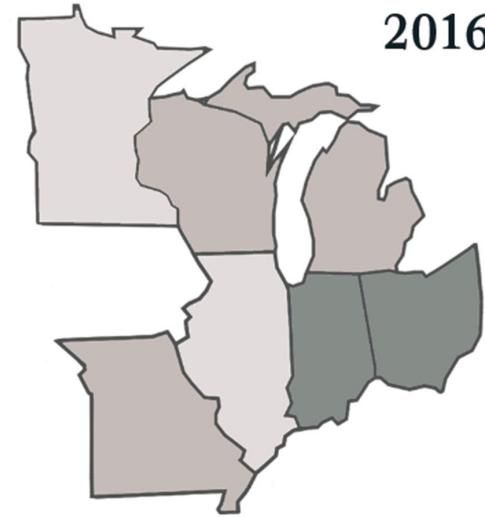
- Midwest families are three times more likely to have 50% drop to family income over two years; 15% of all Midwest families now experience this
- Hyper-segregation and sprawl have driven racial conflict and unravelling of older industrial cities
- Unions have been strategically decimated; wage gains in the Midwest are the worst in the USA
- Great Risk Shift: massive transfer of economic risk from the corporate sector and government to the fragile balance sheets of American families

VOTERS ARE
CONFLICTED
DRIVEN BY
HOPE, DESPAIR
& INCREASING
PRECARITY

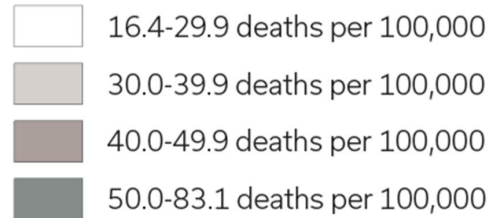
WE MUST
CONTEST
FOR THEM
NOT CATER
TO A MYTH



2005



2016



Indicators of Despair
and Shame: Deaths
from Drugs, Alcohol,
or Suicide per 100,000
People in Midwest

Data: 2005-2016 National Vital Statistics System (NVSS) Mortality Data. Source: Susan L. Hayes, David C. Radley, and Douglas McCarthy, "States of Despair: A Closer Look at Rising State Death Rates from Drugs, Alcohol, and Suicide," To the Point (blog), Commonwealth Fund, August 8, 2018

DIFFERENT APPROACH TO **ANALYSIS**

MULTIRACIAL DEMOCRACY

- History of Black and Brown political power
- BLM epicenter: Ferguson and Minneapolis
- Latino, Native, Immigrant, Muslim voters can be margin of victory in state races

CONFLICTED WHITE VOTERS

- No “mythical moderate white voter”
- Previously anchored a progressive base
- Can be organized into the base again

BLACK & BROWN

POLITICAL POWER
IN THE MIDWEST

POPULATION CENTER

- More than seven million Americans identifying as Black live in the Midwest
- Second only to the South as a region

POLITICAL & ORGANIZING HISTORY

- First Black Mayor of a major city:
Carl B. Stokes, 1968-1971
- Chicago Freedom Movement: 1960s
- Successful farmworker organizing campaigns in Ohio and Michigan: 1970s

RESEARCH ANALYSIS & DATA SCIENCE

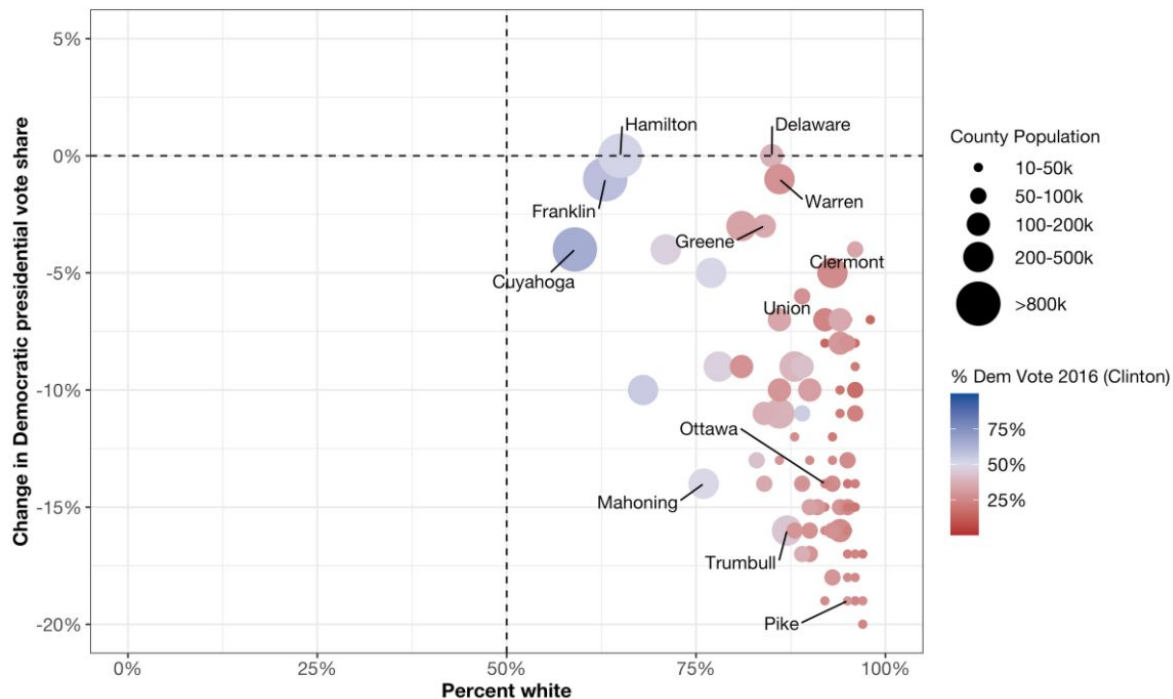
LIZ MCKENNA

P3 Lab, SNF Agora Institute
Johns Hopkins University

DEMOGRAPHICS ARE NOT DESTINY

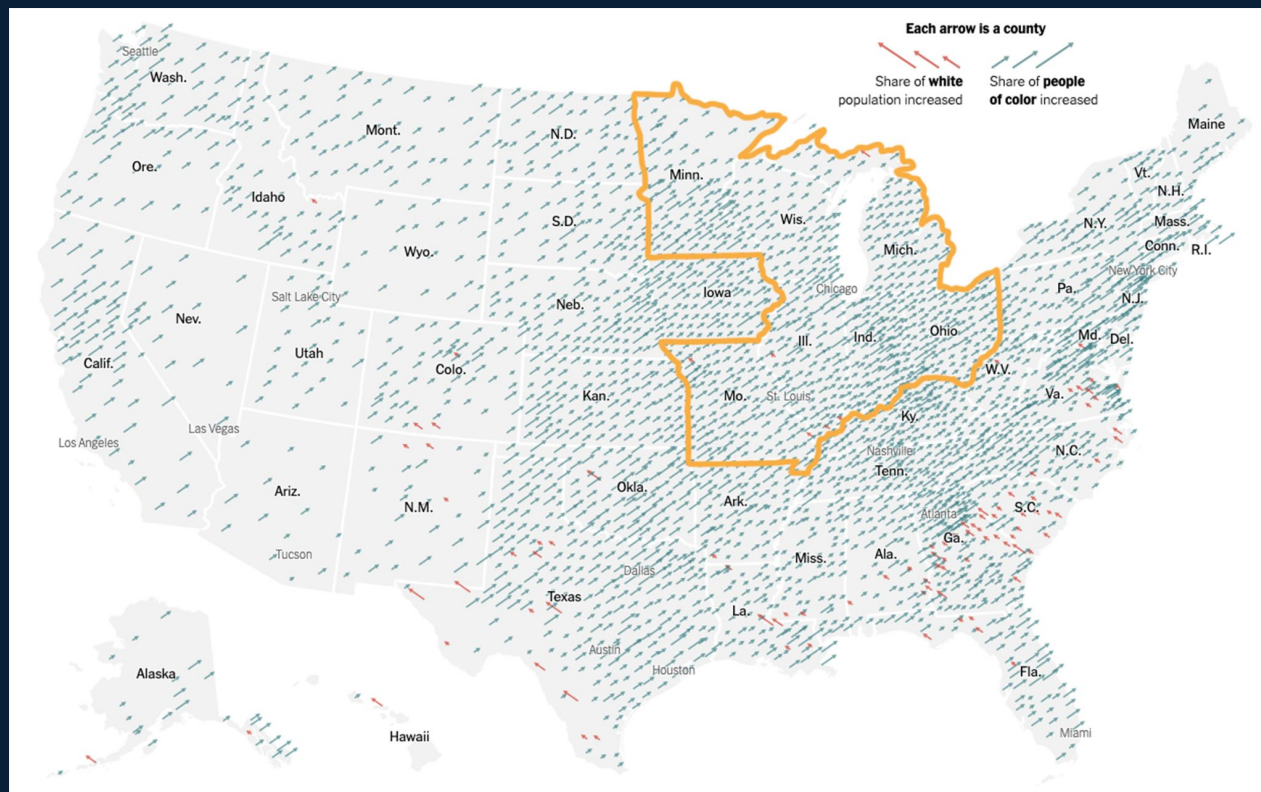
CHANGE IN DEMOCRATIC VOTE SHARE

By Percent White, Ohio Counties (2016-2012)



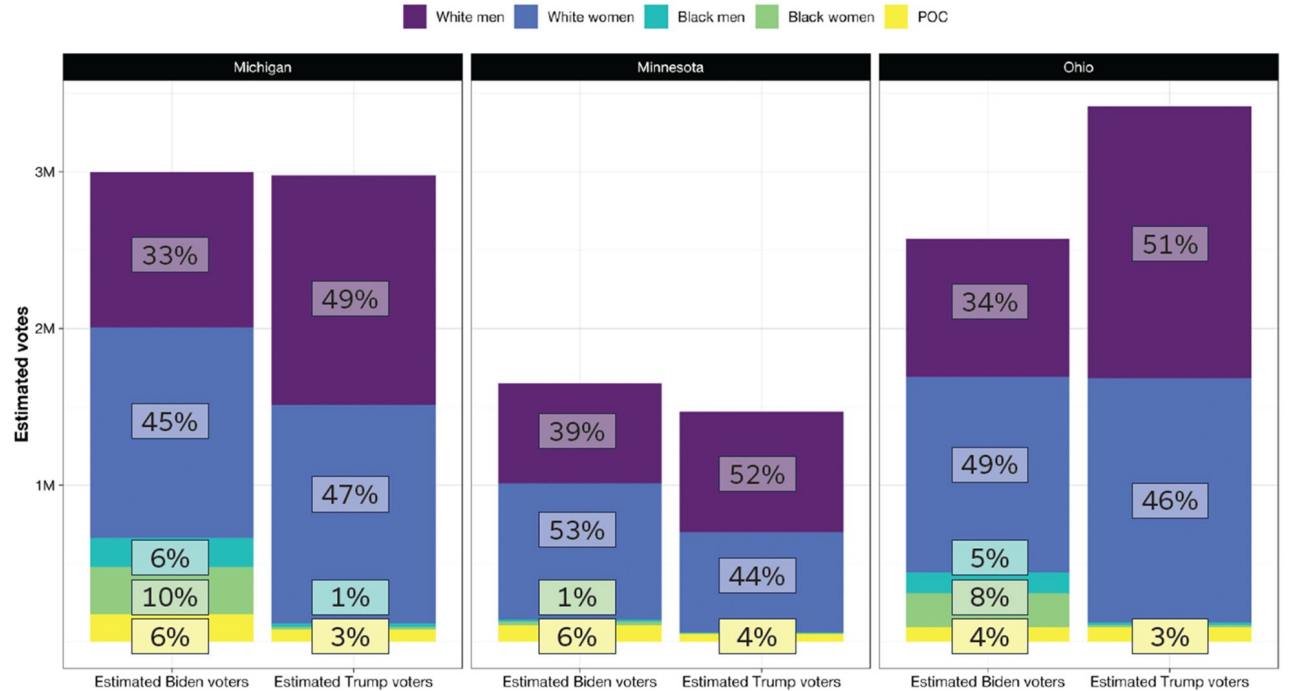
CAN WE BUILD
MULTIRACIAL
GOVERNING
COALITIONS
IN STATES THAT
WILL NOT BE
MAJORITY
OF COLOR
ANYTIME SOON?

Where the Racial Makeup of the US Shifted Over the Past Decade



ONLY FIVE COUNTIES in our study area experienced an increase in the share of white population since 2010. (Map: New York Times)

FALSE CHOICES UNDERMINE THE WORK NECESSARY TO CONSTRUCT MULTIRACIAL GOVERNING COALITIONS

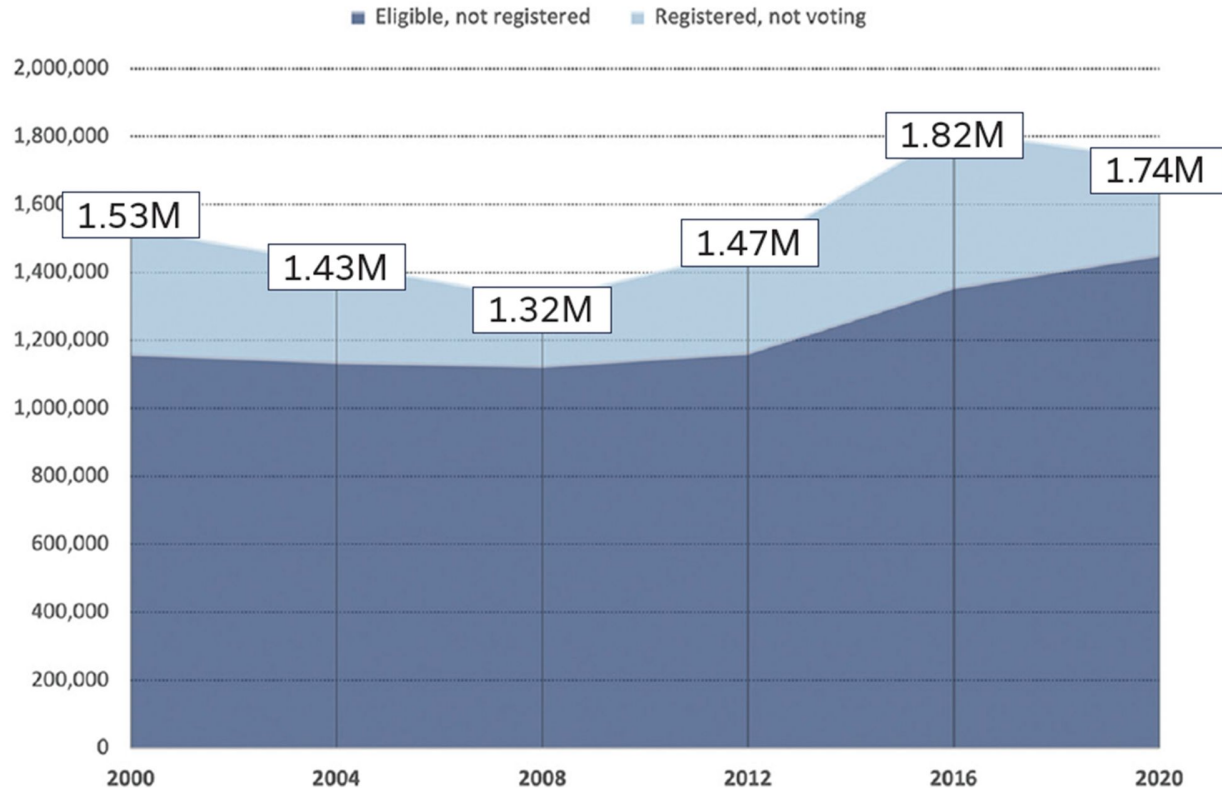


Notes: This analysis estimates Trump and Biden support by multiplying known 2020 voters from the voter file with exit poll data from CNN. As a result, it is subject to the known challenges with exit poll data, but nevertheless shows the complex multiracial electorate needed for progressives and Democrats to win statewide in the Midwest.

**LARGEST BLACK
POPULATION
OUTSIDE THE SOUTH**

**EPICENTER FOR
CIVIL RIGHTS
AND BLM**

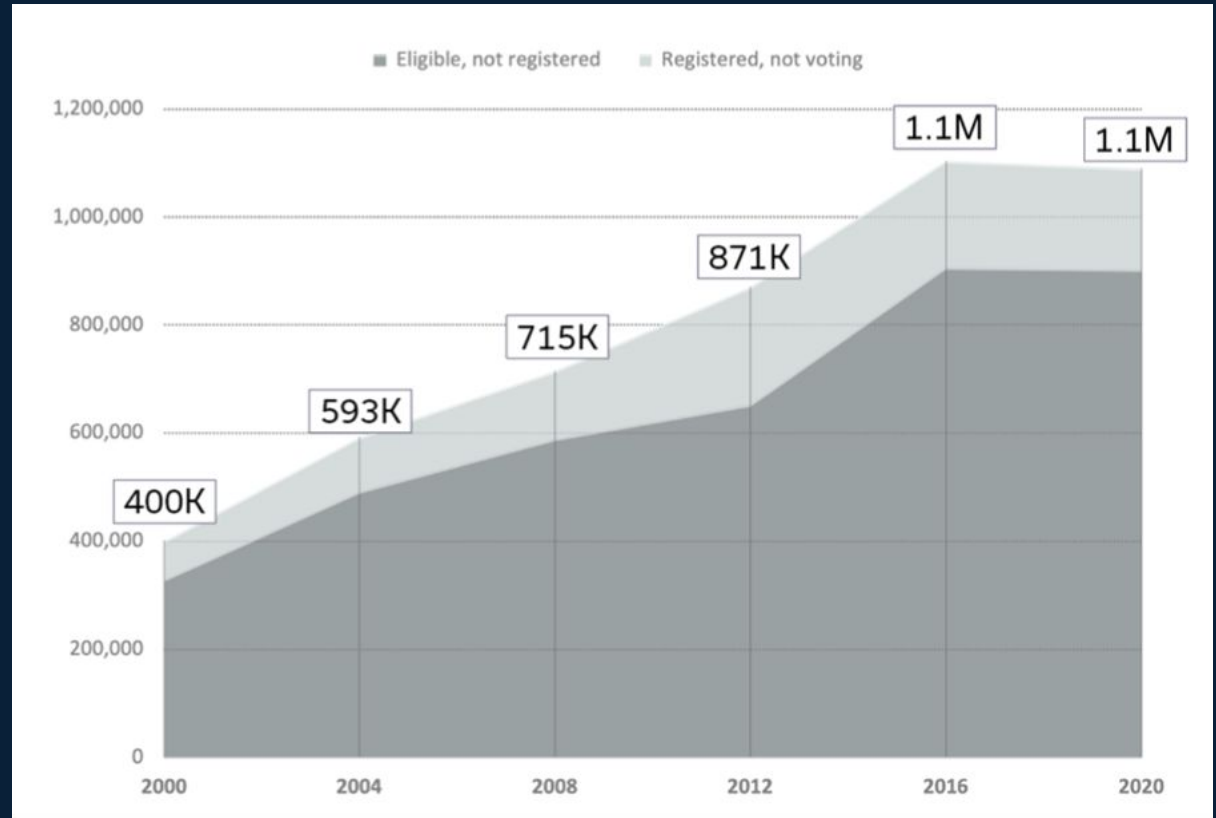
**1.74M
MISSING BLACK
VOTERS IN 2020
ELECTION**



Hispanic Votes Left on the Table, 2000-2020

**HISPANIC
VOTERS ARE
GEOGRAPHICALLY
DIVERSE**

1.1M
MISSING HISPANIC
VOTERS IN 2020
ELECTION

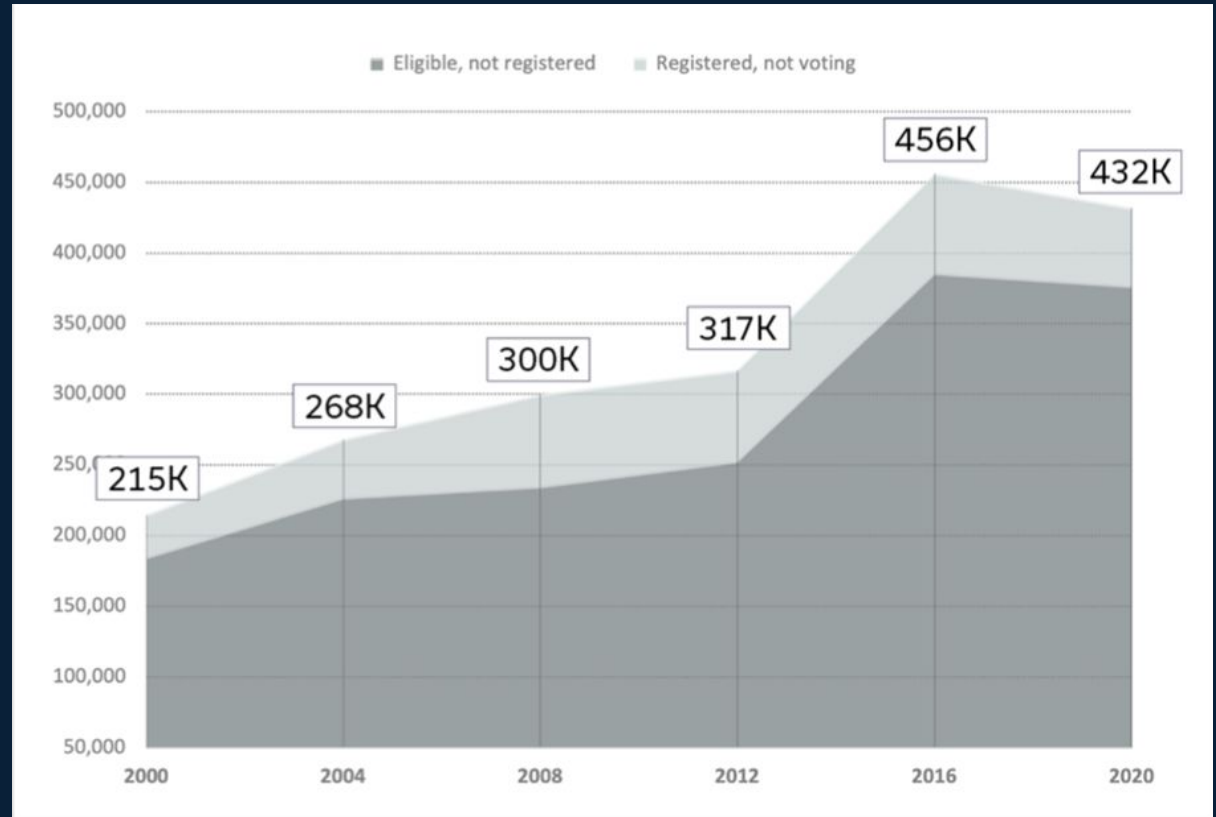


Data: US Census; Chart: Community Building Strategies

AAPI Votes Left on the Table, 2000-2020

**ASIAN AMERICAN
PACIFIC ISLANDER
VOTERS ARE
UNDERREPRESENTED
IN ELECTIONS**

1.1M
MISSING AAPI
VOTERS IN 2020



STRATEGIC IMPLICATIONS

Invest in **ORGANIZING AND INSTITUTIONS** that are fundamental to making meaningful connections in people's lives

LEAN INTO RACE AND CLASS together; dismiss false arguments that pit investments in white voters vs. Black/immigrant voters

Invest in **STATE-BASED ECOSYSTEMS** that can retain and grow capacity cycle-to-cycle both in organizing and electoral strategies

Advance strategic capacities across the Midwest that can **ACCELERATE AND SUPPORT ON-THE-GROUND ORGANIZING** (i.e. WMTF)

GOVERNING
COALITIONS ARE
LONG-TERM
INVESTMENTS

BUILT THROUGH THE
PATIENT,
DEEP WORK
OF ORGANIZING



NEXT STEPS

Full reports and state overviews are
AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD/READ ONLINE;
links will be shared with this slide deck
and a recording of today's presentation

WINNING THE MIDWEST CONFERENCE
Tuesday, May 24, 2020

Organization of a **REGIONAL COHORT**

Development of additional research on
AGENCY, CONNECTION AND IDENTITY

QUESTIONS & DISCUSSION

FEW SOCIETIES
IN HISTORY HAVE
MANAGED TO BE BOTH
**MULTIRACIAL &
GENUINELY DEMOCRATIC.**

THAT IS OUR CHALLENGE.
IT IS ALSO OUR OPPORTUNITY.

IF WE MEET IT, AMERICA
**WILL BE TRULY
EXCEPTIONAL.**

Stephen Levitsky, How Democracies Die