

# Impact Report



# 2024

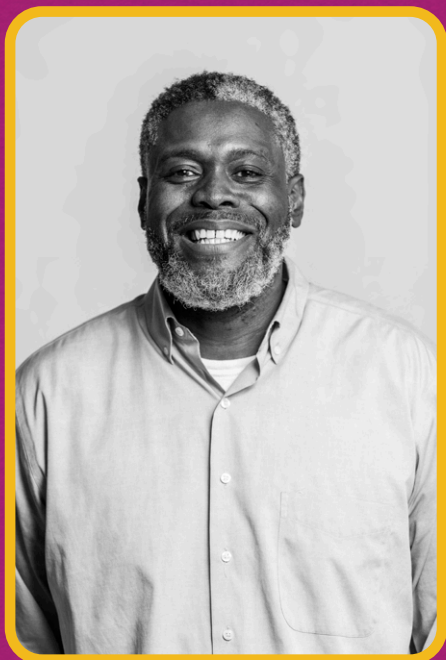


# Letter



# from the

# Co-Executive



# Directors



Dear Community,

The President and the billionaires in power are using every moment to sow fear and chaos in their ruthless plan to consolidate power. We stand with you as we endure increasing threats to our peace and safety—from ICE stops and deportations, cuts to healthcare and social safety nets, and unchecked executive power. It is more important now than ever before that we ground ourselves in our collective power and remind ourselves and our communities what we are capable of. We are the ones we are waiting for and, together, we will win.

To that end, today, we are incredibly proud to present our 2024 Impact Report. Last year, our affiliated network of 51 grassroots power-building organizations committed to using every moment to grow our leadership base, increase understanding of the issues, and prepare our people for the current moment. We focused on ensuring Black, brown, immigrant, and working-class leaders were growing the relational infrastructure needed for the road ahead.

**Together, we recruited 108,000 new contacts into our network, and won 30 campaign victories and several key defensive fights that stand to bring real relief to millions of people.**

While this is far from enough, it is a blueprint we can follow towards the change we wish to make. Last year was marked by an unpredictable election cycle, genocide in Palestine, natural disasters like Hurricanes Helene and Milton, and uncertainty about the fate of our democracy. But the Popular Democracy network was built for times like this. Our Network of organizers and leaders worked tirelessly to understand the needs of our communities, mobilize unlikely voters to the polls, and advance policies around affordable housing, accessible healthcare, immigrant and workers' rights, climate resilience, police-free schools, and more that matter the most to our people.

In times of crisis, creating spaces to slow down and reflect on our successes and failures as we shape our collective path forward is important. Our network came together to share lessons, strategize, laugh, cry, and remind each other who and what we are fighting for. Through art and cultural events like our Hip Hop 4 Peace concerts, a cultural caravan as part of our House Every One campaign, or election-themed murals, we reached new communities and welcomed them into our network. As co-executive directors, we seek to uplift our peoples' experiences and sharpen our vision for our future. We effectively advanced this work in 2024, reinforcing our ability to directly confront racial capitalism and the forces currently trying to deconstruct our Democracy.

As one of the largest progressive power-building networks in the country, we are well-positioned to adapt to evolving political conditions and mobilize massive numbers of people to take action. Every day, we work alongside hundreds of thousands of frontline organizers nationwide to create lasting change. Through strategic base-building, organizing to raise consciousness and shift narrative, and sustained direct action, we will not stop fighting for a true representative democracy.

Stay tuned for more on how we are fighting back in 2025 and beyond—but for now; we hope you will take a moment to read through the 2024 report that illustrates the immense power of our network and the work we have done to prepare for this moment. We cannot say enough how grateful we are for our staff, affiliates, boards, allies, funders and donors, and every single person who has taken action with Popular Democracy. You are the heart of this movement! This is a fight for liberation that is grounded in our love for humanity and JOY; today we celebrate all we've achieved together.

In solidarity,

Analilia Mejia and DaMareo Cooper  
Co-Executive Directors, Popular Democracy





Popular Democracy builds the power of Black, brown, immigrant, and working people to upend politics as usual through impactful issue-campaigns and strategic basebuilding.

We are a network of 46 community-led affiliates in 33 states and Washington, DC.

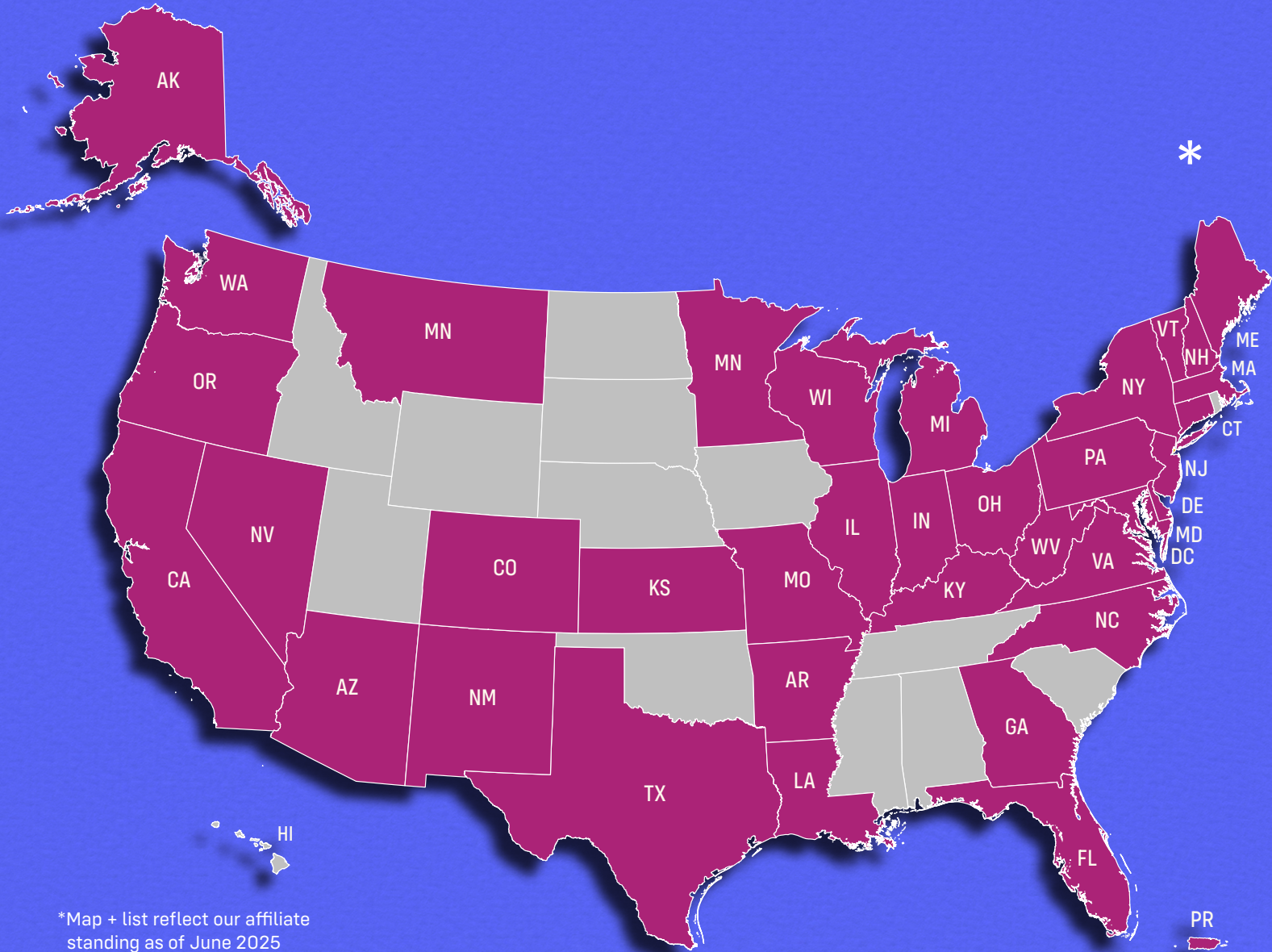


# Contents

I	Our Affiliates	4
II	Our Purpose: Achieve Governing Power	8
III	Our Impact	15
IV	2024 Elections	20
V	How to Fight Back in 2025	24
VI	Know Your Rights	27
VII	Tribute to Oona Chatterjee	28
VIII	Introducing Heidi Lee, our Chief Development Officer	29
IX	We The Poets: "A House, Rebuilt" by Kyle the Jukebox	30
X	Publications	32
XI	Board of Directors	34
	Thank You!	35



# Our Affiliates



\*Map + list reflect our affiliate standing as of June 2025



**ALASKA**

AlaskansTakeAStand / StandUp  
Alaska

**ARKANSAS**

Arkansas Community  
Organizations

**ARIZONA**

Fuerte Arts Movement  
Living United for Change in  
Arizona

**CALIFORNIA**

Alliance of Californians for  
Community Empowerment

**COLORADO**

United for a New Economy

**CONNECTICUT**

Make the Road Connecticut

**DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

SPACES in Action

**DELAWARE**

Opportunity Knocks Delaware

**FLORIDA**

Florida Rising

**GEORGIA**

Black Male Initiative  
CASA  
New Georgia Project

**INDIANA**

Hoosier Action

**KANSAS**

Communities Creating  
Opportunity  
Sunflower Community Action

**KENTUCKY**

Voices of Community Activists  
and Leaders - KY

**LOUISIANA**

Step Up Louisiana

**MARYLAND**

Maryland Communities United  
CASA

**MAINE**

Maine People's Alliance

**MICHIGAN**

Detroit Action  
Flint Rising

**MINNESOTA**

COPAL MN  
New Justice Project

**MISSOURI**

Communities Creating  
Opportunity

**NORTH CAROLINA**

Action NC

**NEW HAMPSHIRE**

Rights and Democracy

**NEW JERSEY**

Make the Road New Jersey

**NEW MEXICO**

Organizers in the Land of  
Enchantment

**NEVADA**

Make the Road Nevada

**NEW YORK**

Churches United for Fair Housing  
For the Many  
Make the Road New York  
New York Communities for  
Change  
Voices of Community Activists  
and Leaders - NY

**OHIO**

Ohio Organizing Collaborative

**OREGON**

Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del  
Noroeste

**PENNSYLVANIA**

215 People's Alliance  
CASA  
Center for Coalfield Justice  
Make the Road Pennsylvania  
One Pennsylvania

**PUERTO RICO**

Taller Salud

**TEXAS**

Texas Organizing Project  
Voices of Community Activists  
and Leaders - TX  
Workers Defense Project

**VERMONT**

Rights & Democracy

**VIRGINIA**

CASA  
New Virginia Majority

**WASHINGTON**

Working Washington

**WISCONSIN**

Black Leaders Organizing for  
Communities  
Leaders Igniting Transformation

**WEST VIRGINIA**

Our Future West Virginia

**NOT STATE-BASED**

Organization United for Respect



# **“Popular Democracy is POWER.**

By centering its affiliates, PD amplifies community leaders' voices and strengthens grassroots movements. PD organizes the organizers who develop their leaders and mobilize local and state communities to win. Together, we Be Da POWER!”

– LaDon Love, SPACeS in Action



  
**GREEN SOCIAL  
HOUSING NOW!**

**GREEN SOCIAL  
HOUSING NOW!**

**EV**



# Our Purpose

## Achieving Governing Power

At the Center for Popular Democracy (CPD), along with our sister organization Popular Democracy in Action (PDiA)—collectively Popular Democracy—we know that everyday people hold the power to change the world. We upend politics as usual to forge a representative, multiracial government and society where we all thrive—no exceptions.



# WE RENT WE VOTE





How do we build this expansive base, especially among those systematically marginalized, and leverage it to attain governing power?

We employ six strategic approaches:

## INCREASE CAPACITY

1. **Recruit, train, and develop member leaders** using tested base-building tactics in partnership with our affiliates
2. **Build a strong network of affiliates** that moves in powerful alignment around a shared purpose

## CONTROL NARRATIVE

3. **Incorporate culture as a strategic tool**, including using art to amplify our core messages and hosting cultural events to invite people into our movement
4. **Deepen our analysis** of where we need to grow our base to achieve governing power, build a culture of evaluation, and share learnings across the network
5. **Contest for narrative primacy** by building a strong brand and sharing popular education to amplify our main priorities

## WIN POWER

6. **Build a strong and resilient Popular Democracy** by establishing consistent assessment and improvement processes that reflect sustainable, responsible, and strategic stewardship of the organization



Through these strategies we harnessed the electoral moment of 2024 to aid in the building of lasting grassroots power. This has positioned us to ultimately achieve the transformative governing power necessary to advance racial, economic, and social justice for all communities.





# Scaling our Base

**Organizing Capacity Support:** A vital role that CPD plays is capacity support for affiliate organizing programs. In 2024, CPD conducted rigorous organizing program assessments with each affiliate. We analyzed their strengths and areas for growth around strategic basebuilding and established a baseline of capacity and goals to strengthen their organizing infrastructure and scale their reach. Through a combination of one-on-one coaching support, in-person and virtual trainings, retreats with organizing and field teams across the network, and dedicated data support, **86% of PD affiliates demonstrated increased organizing capacity and infrastructure by the end of 2024.**

**Organizer Training:** In 2024, the Popular Democracy network **grew to over 3.5 million people**, supported affiliates in strengthening their organizing capacity to scale this work, including training 71 organizers through intensive basic, advanced, and lead organizer training programs, as well as 231 organizers and member leaders in person at four multi-affiliate blitz trainings in Las Vegas, Minneapolis, Hazelton, and Phoenix which brought members and staff from 41 affiliates in community to learn and build together.

**Member Leader Training:** In 2024, CPD developed a four-tier member leader training program combining political education, campaign history, and basic organizing skills across 5 issue areas and **trained 4,093 total people, including 1,468 individuals who completed a comprehensive 12-hour (Tier 2) training in one or more issue areas.**

**Scaled Basebuilding Experiment:** In 2023, CPD advanced our thinking around strategic basebuilding through an initial series of experiments testing a set of outreach tactics for bringing new Black and Latine folks into a grassroots issue-campaign. In 2024, we took these learnings to the next level, with an eye towards **testing not only how to best bring people into our organization, but how to move them through an engagement and leadership development pipeline** to further grow our base.

We partnered with affiliates to test three models for scaling our base through a combination of initial outreach, follow up, and engagement:

- CPD partnered with 18 affiliates to test a **Voter to Member program**—read more about it below.
- CPD partnered with Step Up Louisiana to test a scaled two-tier relational organizing program through the Fall for Liberation project. Building on three years of small scale organizer-in-training programs that the two organizations developed together, **the Fall for Liberation dramatically scaled the work** and tested the capacity of organizers-in-training to recruit, develop, and activate member leaders in their base to mobilize their neighbors to 1) vote and 2) join Step Up Louisiana as members and active participants in issue-campaign work long term
- CPD **advanced testing related to online to offline strategies to reach and engage new people in rapid response moments** and connect them to local campaign efforts. For example, we tested the use of digital ads during periods of extreme heat or following major storms to connect people with immediate resources. We then followed up to bring them into ongoing climate justice campaign efforts. Other tests supporting housing, climate, and worker justice campaigns led by our affiliates were designed to reach key constituencies that were not reachable by traditional field or phone contact methods..

**Voter To Member:** CPD supported affiliate efforts to build out membership flows for new member leads that were generated via GOTV and electoral programs. 18 affiliate organizations participated in this program and each organization used varying methods to move voters into a membership flow. **We provided support via initial program setup meetings, 3 in-person trainings, monthly virtual training spaces, and weekly check-ins with participating affiliates** to collect metrics and troubleshoot gaps or bottlenecks in the voter to member flows. As a result, affiliates **successfully identified 113,231 leads** from GOTV conversations into an organizing flow to join permanent membership chapters and issue campaigns while simultaneously increasing the number of dues paying members.



In 2024, the  
Popular Democracy  
network grew to  
over  
**3.5**  
million people



18 affiliates  
identified  
**113,231**  
potential members  
from GOTV work



**4,093**  
people trained in  
political education  
and organizing  
skills



**86%** of  
affiliates  
strengthened  
organizing  
programs and  
grew their base by  
**at least 10%**

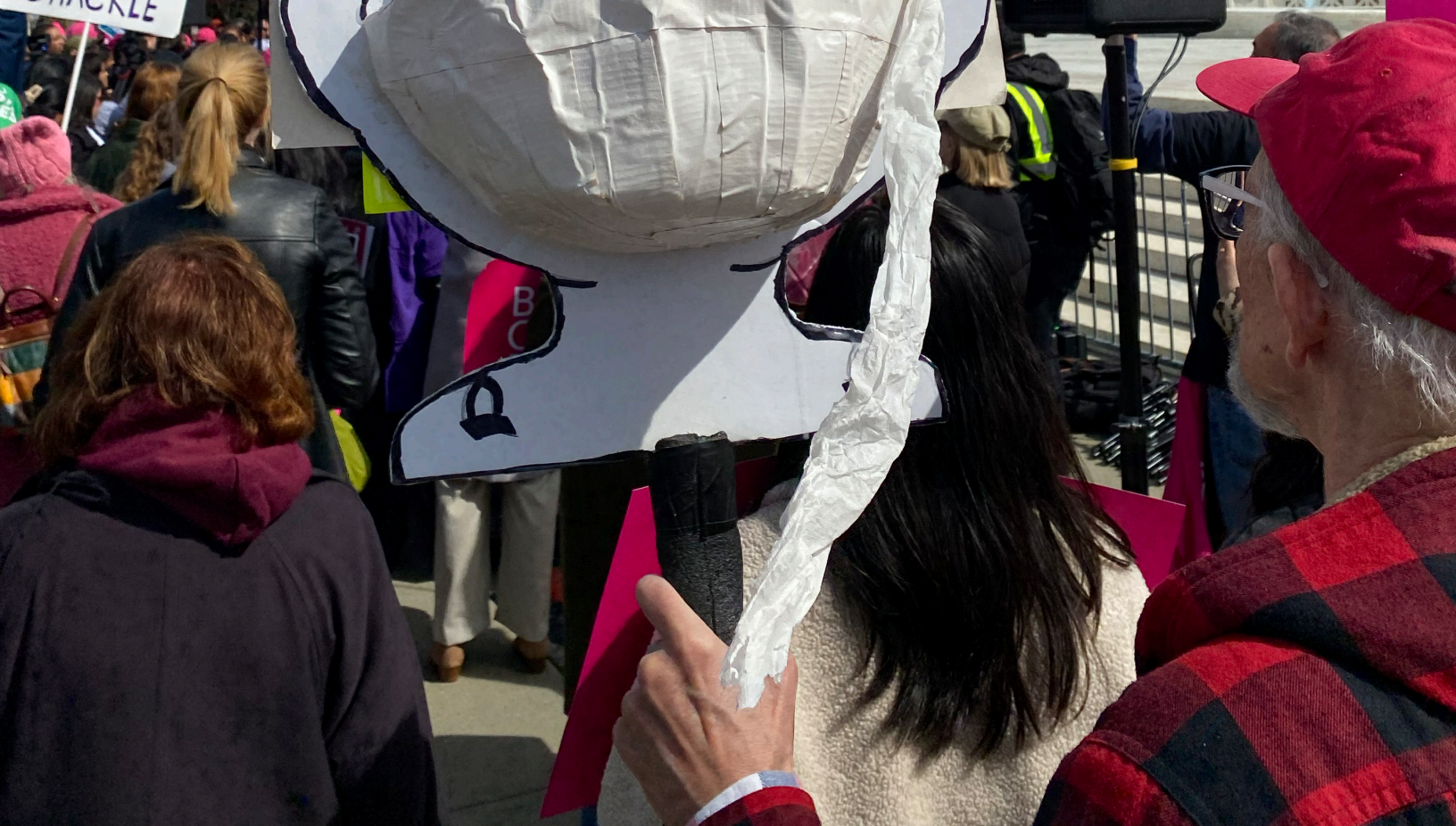


**3,197**  
member leaders from  
affiliates actively and  
regularly move a base of  
**104,481 people**  
through relational  
organizing work





THE BIBLE  
CAN BE YOUR  
GUIDE  
BUT NOT MY  
SHACKLE











# Our Impact

In 2024, the Center for Popular Democracy (CPD) network of 51 affiliates and allies won 30 campaign victories and over 15 key defensive fights that stand to benefit millions of people. Here are some of the victories we delivered at the federal level and across 15 states, Washington D.C., and Puerto Rico:



# JUSTICE TRANSFORMATION & EDUCATION JUSTICE

Through our affiliate cohorts and one-on-one campaign strategy support, we helped advance several wins across the network, including:

- Make the Road Pennsylvania, CASA Pennsylvania, and coalition members advocated for a statewide adoption of an equitable education funding formula that would **increase money towards quality education**. Their advocacy resulted in the state investing \$1B in K-12 education funding, including \$5M for Title I schools and unhoused families.
- In March, thanks to advocacy from Ohio Organizing Collaborative / Building Freedom Ohio, State Reps. Brett Hilkkyer and Bill Seitz introduced the Getting Rehabilitated Ohioans Working (GROW) Act. This bill would **allow certain people with criminal convictions to get their records automatically sealed** and is estimated to help over 1M people.
- Since 2021, VOCAL-NY has been a strong advocate of Daniel's Law (S2398/A2210), a bill that was reintroduced by the New York state legislature in 2024. Daniel's Law would **remove police officers as first responders to people experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis** and instead allow social workers, mental health counselors, peers, and other health workers to step in.
- In September, alongside CPD, the People's Coalition for Safety and Freedom, launched their **revolutionary bill framework: The People's Bill**. These policy proposals emerged after many years of surveys, focus groups, and People's Movement Assemblies and emphasize **investing in community instead of carceral infrastructure while promoting policies rooted in care and respect for human dignity**.





# HEALTHCARE

- At the federal level, CPD worked closely with affiliates around the country to secure many significant wins. Affiliates included SPACES In Action, Stand Up Alaska, VOCAL-NY, Make the Road NY, Center for Coalfield Justice, Texas Organizing Project, Rights & Democracy, Arkansas Community Organizations, Action North Carolina, OK Delaware, Make the Road NV, and New Georgia Project. Together we won the following:
  - Three of the top insulin manufacturers decided to **extend the Inflation Reduction Act's Medicare \$35 monthly out of pocket insulin cap** to people on private insurance, lowering the price of insulin for millions of people. This came after years of direct actions, civil disobedience, lobby visits, birddogging, and digital storytelling that CPD used to pass the IRA and additional public pressure to expand its cost-saving provisions to private insurance.
  - CPD and allies, as part of the Make Medicines Work Campaign, discussed with Sen. Sanders the need to pressure asthma inhaler manufacturers to reduce costs. As a result, three major manufacturers (Boehringer Ingelheim, AstraZeneca, and GSK) announced a **\$35 a month cap for asthma inhalers**.
  - CPD and our Ending the War on Drugs Coalition helped Sen. Warren redraft and **reintroduce the CARE Act**, the most comprehensive, progressive approach to combating the overdose epidemic in America. We held drafting sessions with affiliates and allies and negotiated the usage of more progressive language with Sen. Warren's staff. This led to the inclusion of broader prohibitions on funding going to police and mandates that people with living experience be involved in deciding where funds go.
  - The Biden administration announced the results of their negotiations with pharmaceutical companies for the first 10 medications chosen for the drug price negotiation program, created by the Inflation Reduction Act. The negotiations **cut the list price for the 10 selected drugs between 38 and 79 percent**, which will make it significantly easier for many people to get life-saving medications. CPD worked for years to pass Medicare drug price negotiation and get the IRA across the finish line—organizing direct actions, civil disobedience, lobby visits, birddogging, and digital storytelling.



- CPD held a Medical Debt Townhall with Rep. Ro Khanna to discuss the needs of our members and the importance of building support for the Medical Debt Cancellation Act that he introduced with Sen. Sanders. The bill would essentially **eliminate existing medical debt and create a support infrastructure** to ensure nobody lapses into burdensome debt in the future. We will work to pass this legislation in 2025.
- The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) updated regulations implementing Medicaid Advisory Committees (MACs) and Beneficiary Advisory Councils (BACs). This presents an important opportunity to **enhance the role of Medicaid enrollees and other stakeholders in state Medicaid policy** development and oversight. This is a direct result from the organizing from our medicaid cohort including Arkansas Community Organizations, Texas Organizing Project, New Georgia Project, Maine's People Alliance, Stand Up Alaska, SPACES in Action, OK Delaware, Rights & Democracy-NH.



## IMMIGRANT RIGHTS

- CPD and our affiliates advocated for the **extension of Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for multiple countries** with the goal of delaying the Trump administration's anti-immigrant agenda, securing victories for El Salvador and Venezuela early in January of 2025.
- In a move that was projected to help more than 100,000 people get health insurance, the Biden administration announced that it would **expand Affordable Care Act healthcare coverage to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients**—a crucial step to getting immigrants the healthcare they need. CPD, along with partners in the ACA4DACA campaign, followed up with outreach to DACA recipients during the ACA open enrollment period.



## CLIMATE JUSTICE

- In 2024, CPD affiliate Make the Road New Jersey made **significant strides towards zonal decarbonization pilots** by holding community meetings and having discussions with policy makers. This resulted in the creation of a zonal decarbonization pilot in a Union County, NJ municipality, connected to a geothermal network, in a neighborhood surrounding the city hall and local library. They are also in conversation with two other municipalities about city and school based pilots.
- In 2024 CPD affiliate Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment (ACCE), alongside other partners, held community meetings, actions and meetings with policy makers on the environmental impacts of fossil fuels. This resulted in a ballot initiative to **hold Chevron accountable for the environmental and climate damages** it has caused. For years ACCE and their coalition partners have organized to hold Chevron accountable and in order to avoid pursuit of litigation, in 2024, Chevron agreed to settle and pay the city of Richmond \$550 million dollars over the next 10 years.
- CPD affiliate Make the Road Nevada, with the support of CPD, ran a campaign to do community research air monitoring in parts of Las Vegas that suffer from heat island effect—an effect that is even more heightened due to extreme heat days. As a result of this, street vendors won licences that would **allow street vendors the ability to station their carts in places that are more protected from extreme heat** and protect them from police harassment. MRNV then worked with local elected officials to submit license requests.





## STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Our Strategic Initiatives team incorporates culture as a catalyst for social change. Through powerful in-person cultural activations, striking public art, and impactful films, we reached thousands in-person in 11 cities, 8 states, 2 countries, and millions through our civic engagement films. Here are some highlights from 2024:

- CPD, partnering with affiliates Texas Organizing Project and VOCAL-Texas, **organized a House Every One Cultural Caravan**, a three-city tour across Texas amplifying our network-wide campaign's call for housing for all. This happened parallel to South by Southwest.
- Murals Unite is CPD's **nationwide street art initiative to spark civic engagement and strengthen local organizing**. In collaboration with world-renowned artists like Dasic Fernandez, Nelson Cekis Rivas, La Morena, Southwest Fredy, and Andre Trenier, we created murals in politically vital cities: Allentown, PA; Phoenix, AZ; Las Vegas, NV; Detroit, MI; and Long Island, NY. Each mural unveiling became a community gathering, forging deeper ties between our affiliates—including Make the Roads Nevada, Pennsylvania, and New York, Living United for Change in Arizona, and Detroit Action—and the broader Guardians of Democracy work led by CPD.
- CPD organized **three major Hip Hop concerts calling for peace** and delivering a powerful message of solidarity. Our concerts in Brooklyn, NY and Los Angeles, CA, featured legendary artists like Talib Kweli, Ana Tijoux, Smif-N-Wessun, Saul Williams and Immortal Technique. In Barcelona, as part of the PAH Housing Delegation (Plataforma de Afectadas por la Hipoteca) we brought together Yasiin Bey (Mos Def), Ana Tijoux, and Italian Hip Hop pioneers Assalti Frontali. Each show drew hundreds of attendees, uniting artists and communities and delivering a powerful message of solidarity. Through these initiatives, we activated new networks, empowered communities, and raised critical funds to continue our work.

## ECONOMIC & WORKER JUSTICE

- CPD worked with Make the Road New Jersey to educate our members and our communities about the need for more protection for temporary workers. Thanks to these efforts, NJ followed up the a groundbreaking passage of the **Temp Worker Bill of Rights with model regulations**, ensuring protections and standards for workers in a sector lacking real oversight for far too long are fully implemented. CPD provided critical strategic research, campaign planning and communications partnership leading to the win. The law helps ensure equal pay for temp workers, eliminates excessive temp agency fees, and adds anti-retaliation protections.





# 2024 Elections





# GUARDIANS OF DEMOCRACY

The Center for Popular Democracy's (CPD's) Guardians of Democracy program moves grassroots members of our affiliates into greater leadership in their organization's civic engagement and electoral work. In 2024, we held 20 Guardians of Democracy training sessions across the country in PA, ME, NY, NV, MI, LA, OH, AZ, CA, FL, NC, CT, and NJ.

We trained 672 member leaders in these sessions to serve as hyper-local "precinct leaders." Each member was provided with a contact list of 100 voters who live in their immediate neighborhood (typically on their block) and they committed to making multiple attempts to contact those voters about issues of concern in their community and about voting.

Over the course of the year, a total of **532** Guardians engaged in outreach to their list of 100 neighbors and had a total of **45,340** conversations with them. These dedicated grassroots leaders, along with those who will join as the program expands, serve as a crucial foundation for the infrastructure our movement urgently needs to build political power beyond election cycles.



## RESPECT OUR VOTE

**Alongside affiliates and allies in the Election Sabotage Response Network (ESRN), we prepared to protect the will of voters.** In the lead-up to November, we responded to certification threats—driving hundreds of letters to targeted Georgia county election officials—and prepared the network to mobilize, if needed. We led political education teach-ins with about **250** participants across **23** affiliates, hosted safety trainings in partnership with Democracy Security Project (with **83** participants), set up a rapid response structure, and provided coordination and materials for potential nationwide, multi-city demonstrations. For the days immediately after polls closed, we brought together **57** member leaders and organizers from **eight** affiliates to Phoenix for organizing training and action-taking. Given the results, we pivoted to ballot curing, with member leaders talking to **176** Arizona voters and our National Canvass team calling **1,275** voters in key states, reaching **106** voters whose votes had been challenged.

## WE RENT, WE VOTE

A related effort was CPD's We Rent, We Vote program, based on polling in battleground states that showed that the cost of housing was the number one concern and priority of renters—but one they were not hearing addressed by elected officials and candidates. We acquired data on which voters were renters and **helped affiliates create voter contact universes and scripts to reach Black and brown renters who are "high potential voters"** with messaging that spoke directly to their concerns about the high cost of rent.

**We provided financial resources and hands-on staff support for data and training for six affiliates in five battleground states, helping those affiliates recruit over 100 outreach workers from their base of renter activists. They collectively held 56,124 conversations with Black and brown "likely renters."** These resulted in **48,250** pledges to vote, **15,859** commitments to vote tripling, and **8,380** people expressing interest in getting involved with their local group.





HOUSE OF  
WOMEN

VIVIR  
POR  
TODOS

WERE  
NOT  
PERFECT  
WE'RE  
JUST  
HUMAN

COORDINATOR  
Hedge Printing, LLC



“TOP is transforming Texas by building power with working people of color.

**Being a part of the Popular Democracy network gives us invaluable opportunities to connect our struggle here to people across the country and strengthen our movement.**

PD creates a powerful network of support we're proud to be a part of.”

– Brianna Brown,  
Texas Organizing Project



# How to Fight Back in 2025

**Want to take further action with Popular Democracy to Fight Back against threats to our communities?**

First, **join our biweekly National Fight Back calls** by registering at **[PopDemoc.org/FightBack](https://PopDemoc.org/FightBack)**.

- Get trained in Empower, a powerful relational organizing tool that can help you mobilize your neighbors to take action – no experience necessary. (If you want to get a head start, download the app! It guides you through every step. Our invite code is: populardemocracy)
- Learn about which districts and members of Congress we'll be focusing on as we push back on the new administration's right-wing, extremist agenda.
- Get connected on strategic opportunities to take action at home and in DC.

Then, sign up to become a **Hill Champion** at **[PopDemoc.org/HillChampions](https://PopDemoc.org/HillChampions)**.

Our Hill Champions program is an initiative to train people like you to join us in fighting against policies threatening black, immigrant, LGBTQ, and working-class communities. **Hill Champions is designed to bring the voices of those most affected directly to the decision-makers shaping our futures.** We'll teach you how to engage lawmakers in Washington DC and your home districts, to ensure that our communities' stories and needs are impossible to ignore.











# Know Your Rights

Following the election of Trump and his campaign promises of the “largest deportation program” in US history, and witnessing the early days of the administration with its amped-up, often militarized and random deportation raids, we knew we had to step up. The CPD Immigration, Worker Justice, and Education Justice teams came together to produce a bilingual Know Your Rights Fight Back Toolkit compiling resources from affiliates, including Make the Road NY and CASA, and allies, and widely shared with our network and beyond. Find the toolkit here:

[PopDemoc.org/CommunityDefense](https://PopDemoc.org/CommunityDefense).





# Tribute



# to Oona Chatterjee

It is with the deepest gratitude that Popular Democracy acknowledges our outgoing Chief of Staff, Oona Chatterjee.

An organizing legend, Oona co-founded and co-directed a national powerhouse of immigrant community organizing, Make the Road New York, led national education justice organizing, and, for the last ten powerful years, served as Popular Democracy's first Chief of Base-Building and later, Chief of Staff.

In Oona's Popular Democracy roles, she led work to launch and build new powerful people's organizations across the country, craft the network's long-term strategic vision, organize People's Conventions, develop organizers and

member leaders nationwide, and so much more. Oona's tireless efforts to mentor organizers, seed strategic campaigns, construct organizing infrastructure, and more resulted in a long list of powerful campaign wins that have bettered the lives of countless people throughout the country. Perhaps most importantly, Oona's commitment to organizing with love has, from Make the Road New York to Popular Democracy, built liberatory communities rooted in respect and dignity for all.

Thank you, Oona, and even if we don't get to have you in a staff role any longer, we're so grateful to be on this justice journey together!



# Introducing Heidi Lee



We welcomed our new Chief Development Officer to the team in late 2024. Heidi Lee joined us with over 20 years of fundraising experience in a variety of areas including social justice, education, and political groups. She fell into philanthropy very early in her career and found her passion for deep relationship building and finding people's passions in the nonprofit space.

Heidi loves to listen to true crime podcasts and read books about women's leadership.

She resides in Las Vegas, NV with her partner, son (who thinks he's a cat), and 2 cats (one is 14 the other 2).



# We The Poets

# A House, Rebuilt

## by Kyle the Jukebox

We The Poets is a bold, cultural response to the mounting attacks on the 14th Amendment, leveraging the power of spoken word to galvanize movements and drive policy change.

Please enjoy this poem from our 2025 poetry slam, written by Kyle the Jukebox, We the Poets finalist and an affiliate member from Black Male Initiatives in Atlanta, Georgia.





Hear ye, Hear ye,  
I now speak and decree.  
Addressing to my people and this city  
This city,  
the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement.  
a city that birthed dreams so bold  
They built and shook the foundations of this nation.  
I stand here to speak  
that we are under attack,  
Our rights, once won in blood  
are now being unraveled in ink.  
We gather not just to put mirrors to the issues  
Or band-aids on the mishaps,  
We come together to act.  
Not merely to remember, but to recommit  
Not just to imagine, but to internalize  
A life where we not just dream of a peace that eases sleep  
but to demand the bed.  
These rights were written in ink, but we bled for its  
meaning.

Citizenship defined, yet constantly denied.  
The 14th Amendment promised protection,  
but whose law protects us  
when the gavel gives some pats on the wrists  
And another belt to the backside ?  
Yes, we have come a long way  
But is it far enough?  
The journey looked easy  
yet the roads still ride rough  
Have we truly fulfilled the dream?  
Or have we mistaken progress for arrival?  
Have we not seen rights snatched back  
while we rested in the glow of past victories?  
The house still burns—  
Yet we look at the flames with such ease  
As the foundation cracks under corrupt policies that  
silence, erase.

They tell us:  
Wait. Be patient. Change takes time.  
But tell that to the child in a cage at the border.  
Tell that to the voter turned away at the polls.  
Tell that to the mother mourning a son  
Who was never given a chance then turned  
Citizen to martyr  
Our ancestors built monuments of hope

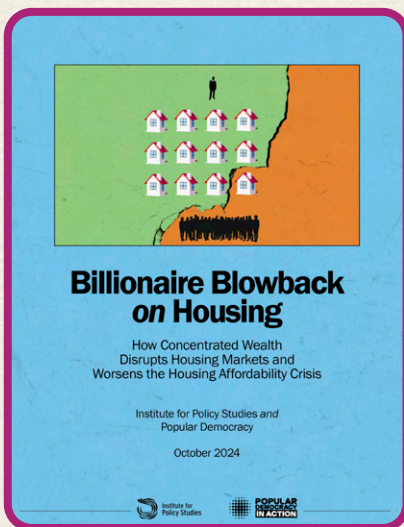
from the scraps they were given.  
Marched with blistered feet,  
sang freedom through parched throats,  
planted seeds of justice in soil  
that was never meant to nourish them.  
And yet—  
here we stand,  
their wildest dreams made flesh.  
But dreams without action become nightmares.  
The arc of the moral universe is long,  
but it does not bend on its own.  
It bends because we pull it—  
with hands calloused from labor  
and hearts softened by love.  
So let us rebuild with the bricks of accountability,  
the mortar of solidarity.  
Let us register the disenfranchised,  
organize the neglected,  
speak for the silenced.  
Not for the spotlight,  
but for the legacy we leave behind.  
I yell, I speak  
I sing and decree.  
That this city—  
the cradle of the Civil Rights Movement,  
the city that birthed dreams so bold  
They built and shook the foundations of this nation.

The dream is not dead.  
It lives in the student fighting to stay in school,  
in the single mother working two jobs,  
in the organizer marching for justice,  
in the artist painting a world yet to come,  
in the athlete told to shut up and dribble—  
but who plays, who speaks, who stands anyway.  
Let us not grow weary in well-doing.  
For in due season, we shall reap what we sow.  
Let us walk together—  
No. Let us work together.  
No. Let us fight together.  
So when they ask what we did in the face of injustice,  
let our answer be this:  
We created a sanctuary of justice, love, and equality.  
We grabbed each other, walked out of the flames,  
and built ourselves a new house.  
A house where justice is the foundation,  
equity is the framework,  
and love is the roof that shelters us all.

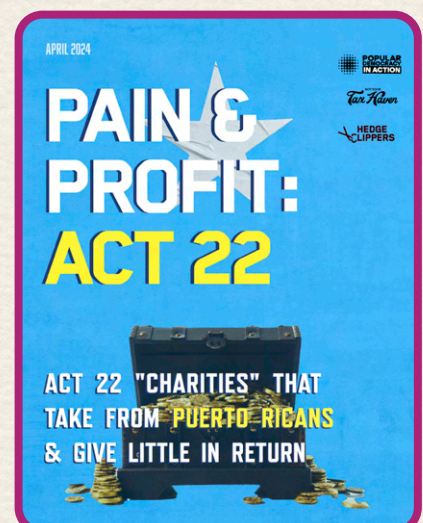
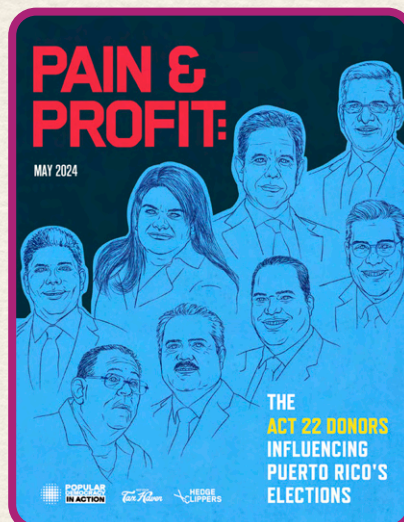


# Publications

## HOUSING



## PUERTO RICO









# Board of Directors

The CPD Board of Directors are composed of representatives from our key constituency groups: state affiliates, core national partner organizations, allied partners, and community members. The Board oversees and approves core strategic direction for CPD, and holds us accountable to our stated annual goals and objectives.

**Analilia Mejia**

Co-Executive Director, Center for Popular Democracy

**DaMareo Cooper**

Co-Executive Director, Center for Popular Democracy

**Aaron Dorfman**

Executive Director, National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy

**Matt Hollamby**

Independent Consultant

**Christina Livingston**

Executive Director, Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment

**Jose Lopez**

Co-Executive Director, Make the Road New York

**Alicia Russell**

Living United for Change in Arizona

**Ramon Ramirez**

Former President, Pineros y Campesinos Unidos del Noroeste

**Kirk Noden**

Principal, Community Building Strategies

**Rafael Navar**

Co-Founder and Treasurer, Mijente

**Brianna Brown**

Co-Executive Director, Texas Organizing Project

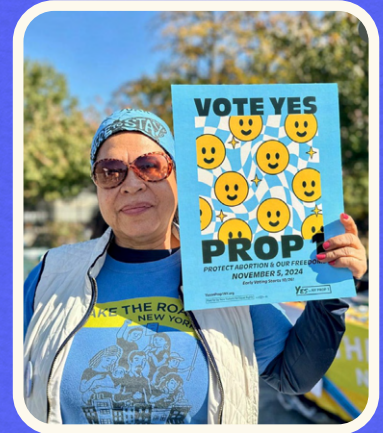
**LaDon Love**

Executive Director, SPACES in Action





# Thank You!



As our communities weathered attacks on numerous fronts in 2024, the Popular Democracy network continued to drive forward critical work to protect the progress we've made over the years. Despite the uncertainty regarding what lies ahead, our network grew in size and strength. We are deeply grateful to each of you for the role you played in our work last year and we feel hopeful that, together, we will win lasting change for us all.





Sustain our work by  
starting a monthly gift today!

