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2016  
2018



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STRATEGIC PLAN



Friend,

Thank you for your interest in the Ohio Democratic Party's 1618 Plan. Our plan is a reflection of the best practices and input we gathered from activists, stakeholders and experts within Ohio and across the country.

As we can effectively implement this strategic plan, we are confident we can be competitive in *every* election cycle, and recruit, elect and protect public servants at all levels of government—from city council to United States Senator—who give Ohio families a fighting chance.

Our *1618 Plan* contains three fundamental strategies:

- 1) Building a bench of strong public servants;
- 2) Creating a robust, permanent infrastructure that increases voter engagement and participation every year; and
- 3) Making it crystal clear why we are Democrats and what we are fighting for.

Your support, participation and a relentless commitment to these priorities will be the keys to our success in 2016, 2018 and beyond.

We encourage you to review the attached *1618 Plan*, and we welcome your honest feedback and suggestions.

Most importantly, we invite you to get involved!

Sincerely,

David Pepper  
Chairman

## THE VISION

The Ohio Democratic Party's vision is to build a strong, energized Party that shoulders our unique responsibility to win all statewide offices and re-elect U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown in 2018 and maintain our strength for success in 2020 and beyond.

## THREE STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

To achieve our vision, ODP will relentlessly focus on three strategic imperatives.

### 1. Building Our Bench

A strong bench of effective public servants at all levels comprises the heart of a strong state party. That's why the ODP is committed to recruiting and cultivating candidates who connect with voters, win elections at all levels, and once they enter office, make a difference on the issues that matter most in the lives of their constituents.



The first stage of building our bench begins with our *Main Street Initiative*, which provides candidates with the training and ongoing support they need to be successful in races at the local level every election cycle.

From Chillicothe to Dover to Toledo, our Main St. candidates go through multiple phases of training and receive voter file support and extensive, hands-on assistance from ODP staff with their campaign and voter contact plans and fundraising programs.

We will be active with our *Main Street Initiative* in every election cycle, focusing on municipal and school board elections in odd years and county seats in even years.

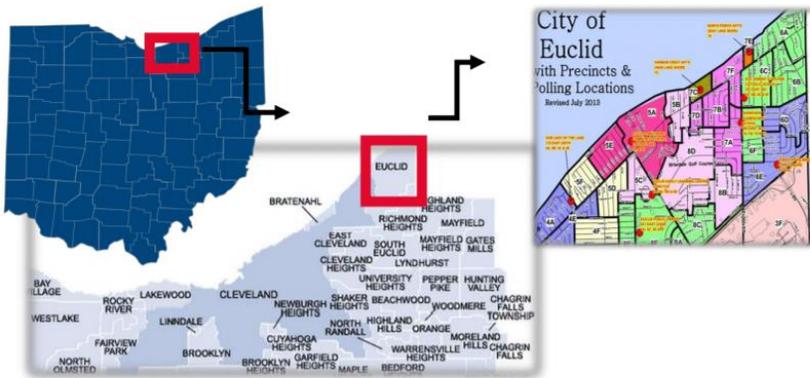
The next stage is to build and expand our next generation of elected leaders through our *Democratic Elected Municipal and County Officials (DEMCO) Initiative*. DEMCO is designed to educate and empower current officeholders so they develop their messaging, fundraising, and management skills, gain access to networking opportunities, and implement policies that result in progress for those they serve. We want our next generation of leaders to have strong records of accomplishment and meaningful relationships with key stakeholders across the state if, and when, they choose to seek higher office in the future.

To find out more about our bench-building programs, please contact our Director of Party Affairs at (614) 221-6563 or [lshirey@ohiodems.org](mailto:lshirey@ohiodems.org).

## 2. Investing in Our Infrastructure

We are committed to rebuilding and reforming the Party’s infrastructure so it is up and running in all 88 counties every year—not just every four years.

Our first step is to understand the voters of Ohio, which comes from building a robust 21-century data model of precisely what winning Ohio looks like in 2016 and 2018. We partnered with one of the nation’s top data experts to create a *Data Map of a Blue Ohio* in all 88-counties—showing blue counties how much they need to win by and where those voters are, and red counties how many Democrats they must turn out to secure a statewide victory.



Step two is converting our *Data Map of a Blue Ohio* into reality with our statewide ground game. Through our reformed and reenergized neighbor-to-neighbor based *Precinct Organizing Program*, we will set clear goals and expectations, then train and empower volunteers, activist groups and precinct

executives with the necessary tools to turn out Democrats and persuade swing voters to support our candidates.

Ultimately, the most strategic and on-going refinement at the Party is an investment in our most important asset—PEOPLE. We must do a far better job building a robust and energized network of the constituency groups that form the anchor and the heart of the Democratic coalition. To do this, we have reformed our political shop into a broader Engagement Department.

We will continue to support the work of our Ohio Democratic Women’s Caucus and invest in expanding the reach of Ohio Young Democrats, Ohio Young Black Democrats and College Democrats of Ohio. We will refocus our outreach efforts with other critical constituency groups, including LGBTQ Democrats and allied organizations, veterans, and elected officials.

We will broaden and deepen our constituency work even further with the creation of our *Minority Engagement Initiative*—designed to build true partnerships with minority groups and increase their economic inclusion within the Party.

Key members of the Democratic coalition will have an on-going partnership with the ODP—365 days of the year.

To find out more about our infrastructure-building programs, please contact our Engagement Director at (614) 221-6563 or [clowry@ohiodems.org](mailto:clowry@ohiodems.org).

### 3. Making It Clear Why We Are Democrats

As Democrats, we need to make it crystal clear what we stand for and who we stand with. When our message is muddled, we lose.

At all levels of our infrastructure, our message must be crystal clear—Democrats are fighting for authentic, equal economic opportunity for all Ohioans. Our mission is to give all Ohio families a fighting chance. Period.

Institutionally, we must create an “echo chamber” that delivers this message consistently and concisely across the state through every possible channel. This begins with improving our communications internally—to our Democratic officeholders, activists and stakeholders—so everyone knows what we stand for and can communicate it to their networks.

From better use of social media to our weekly newsletter and podcast highlighting Democratic accomplishments across the state, we will pursue every means to get our message out.



Additionally, we must clearly communicate externally—to Democrats and swing voters—the stark difference between the policies promoted by our Democratic officeholders and the extreme, divisive policies enacted by our Republican counterparts who want to take us in the wrong direction.

The ODP has bolstered our communications and digital teams to enhance our efforts at the national, state and local levels. Our staff are already assisting our local candidates with their message, pushing the agenda forward at the statehouse, and working to ensure we understand and define our opponents at all levels.



Finally, we have built a strong grassroots rapid response network of highly engaged and well-trained surrogates across the state (i.e. ODP Truth Team), that combats fake news and holds Republicans accountable. Since the activation of our Truth Team, we have continuously been able to share our message with key stakeholder groups and Ohio voters through earned, owned and paid media.

To find out more about our message or to be part of our Truth Team, please contact our Communications Director at (614) 221-6563 or [kirstin@ohiodems.org](mailto:kirstin@ohiodems.org).